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GOOD CATCH
Seafood & corn
hot off the grill, page 42



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CONTENTS

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2009 ISSUE 100

FEATURES

34 Play It by Ear

Sweet corn on the cob is hard to resist come summer, but there's so much you can do with it off the cob, too. Here are five delicious ideas. *By Maryellen Driscoll*

42 Grilling Shellfish

LEARN A NEW TECHNIQUE Lobster, shrimp, even oysters—almost every kind of shellfish takes on sweet and smoky flavor from the grill. We'll show you how. *By Elizabeth Karmel*

50 Cold Comfort

We took a frozen childhood favorite (remember Popsicles?) and added vodka (or bourbon or sparkling wine) for the coolest new cocktail party of the summer. *By Genevieve Ko*

54 Get Saucy!

COOK ONCE/EAT TWICE Turn those ripe-right-now tomatoes into a big pot of sauce; then make the most of what's left in three unexpected recipes. *By Domenica Marchetti*

62 Party in the Kitchen

Those who cook together, eat well together, especially when the menu's as fresh and fast as this one. *By Ed Schoenfeld*

70 Make Your Own Feta

WEEKEND PROJECT Yes, you can make feta at home, and yes, it's totally worth it. Step-by-step instructions make it easy. *By Bonnie Gorder-Hinchey*

76 Eggplant Parmigiana

CLASSIC/CLASSIC UPDATE The real-deal Italian classic takes on a chef's rustic reinvention. *By Laura Giannatempo and Mikey Price*

Cheese curds hang out on their way to becoming homemade feta. Recipe on page 72.

CONTENTS

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2009 ISSUE 100



26



22



24



18



17

DEPARTMENTS

15 Marketplace

TRY THIS Tomatillos

WHAT WE'RE COOKING NOW
Figs, Summer Squash, Nectarines

PRESERVING THE SEASON
Summer Berries

BIG BUY COOKING
French Bread

22 Keeping Fresh Greens Fresh

THE FOOD GEEK The science of cell structure helps explain why good lettuce goes bad.

24 The Classic Omelet

REPERTOIRE A breakfast standard every cook should know how to make.

26 Great Finds

GO SHOPPING Our latest buys for the kitchen and table.

27 The Reading List

BOOKS THAT COOK New must-haves for food lovers. Plus a staff favorite.

28 Less Is More

THE GOOD LIFE For nutritionist Ellie Krieger, eating less meat is a good idea, but summer cookouts can make that a challenge. She has a solution.

30 Mandolines

TEST DRIVE This time-saving kitchen tool lets you slice, julienne, and crinkle-cut like a pro. Here are three models that are a cut above.

32 Beer Becomes a Cocktail

DRINKS The classic summer thirst quencher also happens to make a great mixed drink—recipes included.

81 Test Kitchen

Tips, techniques, equipment, ingredients, and more, from our experts.

88 Make It Tonight

FAST AND FRESH Just 30 minutes to dinner, start to finish.

98 Diane Hatz

FOOD FOR THOUGHT Changing the way people eat, with the help of a cartoon cow.

in every issue

- 6 FROM THE EDITOR
- 8 READERS' LETTERS
- 10 CONTRIBUTORS
- 12 FINECOOKING.COM
- 93 WHERE TO BUY IT
- 95 NUTRITION
- 96 MENUS
- 97 RECIPE INDEX



pp. 39
& 42
p. 56
p. 61
p. 20
p. 88
p. 50
p. 70

p. 24

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The Big Conversation

AROUND HERE, many of our Monday-morning staff meetings start with a rollicking review of what we cooked and where we ate over the weekend. I'm never less than amazed at the enthusiasm and passion this crew has for food, which defines both their workdays and their downtime. Somebody will have made a dish I've never tried (perhaps their own cheese; see page 70), or discovered a farmstand I didn't know about. Somebody else will have been to a new restaurant or a local food event. They're an inspiration and an excellent resource, too, since these conversations often lead to great story ideas.

Of course, food does tend to be the main topic of conversation in these offices. But it's a pretty popular topic in a lot of places these days, from the front page of *The New York Times* to Twitter, where 140 characters is no barrier to some interesting recipe writing. Find us there, too, and on Facebook. And check out our Web site, where there's always an opinionated exchange going on in the forums. Our bloggers like nothing more than a lot of comments on their posts (don't miss The Food Geek, our resident food science guy, who thrills to the very idea of "why?"). And in the *Fine Cooking* Test Kitchen blog, we share each day's discoveries (and occasional failures).

I like to think we've given you plenty to talk about in this issue, from the irresistible platter of grilled shellfish and corn on our cover to a delicious way to preserve summer berries (page 18). And speaking of summer, don't miss the chance to make fresh tomato sauce (page 54) or mix a refreshing beer cocktail (page 32). So come join the conversation, or start one of your own.



Laurie Buckle, editor
fc@taunton.com

more *Fine Cooking*

ON THE ROAD

Join us for a delicious weekend of dining and drinking at the fourth annual Foxwoods Wine & Food Festival, August 28–30 in southeastern Connecticut. *Fine Cooking* editors and contributors will be hosting gala dinners and conducting seminars on everything from cocktail mixology to cake decorating. With more than 40 chefs at the stoves and some 500 wines and spirits available for tasting, this is New England's biggest culinary event. We'd love to see you! For more information, go to FineCooking.com/fwevent.



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SPECIAL ISSUES

We have two special issues coming to a newsstand near you. Look for contributing editor Ellie Krieger's latest, called *Quick & Fresh*. It features more than 75 deliciously good-for-you recipes. In addition, our Big Buy Cooking column is now a special issue, too. With dozens of fast and tasty recipes for your favorite warehouse foods, it's a food

lover's guide to buying in bulk—and using it all up.



WEB

We love to grill—so much so that we've built a special grilling microsite just to share our best videos, tips, tools, recipes, and more. Check it out at FineCooking.com/grilling.





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THE WINNER

Reader tip: Keeping produce fresh

To keep broccoli, asparagus, and herbs longer, treat them as you would cut flowers. Slice off about ¼ inch from the bottom of the stalks or stems and immediately put them in a jar of water and refrigerate. They'll be almost garden fresh when you use them.

—Lynette L. Walther
Camden, Maine

We want to hear from you. Give us your best tip and we'll reward you with a kitchen prize. Lynette is the winner of this Kataoka Tamahagane 8-inch chef's knife.

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A Fine Cooking weekend

A friend turned me on to *Fine Cooking* a while back, and I've loved every issue. The June/July 2009 issue is truly sublime. For Mother's Day weekend, I made a few of the barbecue-braised recipes, the classic crab cakes, and several of the ice creams. My family was in heaven. I just thought you should know someone is really enjoying all the hard work you put into your magazine.

—Leah McIntyre
Glen Mills, Pennsylvania



Roll call

I just received the June/July issue and wanted to say, Bravo! To get Eric Ripert, David Lebovitz, Bruce Aidells, Abigail Johnson Dodge, and James Peterson in the same issue is quite a coup. The recipes look amazing.

—Zora Safir Hopkins, via email

Fine vegetarian cooking?

I've been a subscriber for quite a while and recently decided to become a vegetarian. Do you have any plans to include more meatless recipes? Most vegetarian cooking magazines I have seen are short on delicious, foolproof vegetarian recipes that aren't casseroles.

—Malcolm Norton
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Editors' reply: We hear you and recognize that a lot of our readers are trying to reduce the amount of meat they eat. We're making an ongoing effort to include dishes that are vegetarian or can be made so with simple modifications. In this issue, for example, our Cook Once, Eat Twice feature stars a vegetarian Fresh Tomato Sauce that takes advantage of the abundance of ripe tomatoes in markets and gardens now. Two of the dishes made with this sauce, the grilled pizzas and a spicy curried chickpea and vegetable stew, are also vegetarian.

Frozen fruit

In your ice cream article "Scooped!" (June/July) you suggested that readers "resist the temptation to mix in whole fruit." I wondered

why, and if there is a way to add chunks of fruit, like strawberries or peaches, as found in store-bought ice creams. I believe they add character and more flavor. Also, when adding peaches you say to "cook to soften." Exactly how do you cook them?

—Patricia DeGeorges, via email

Assistant food editor Melissa Pellegrino replies:

We suggest avoiding fresh fruit because it can become icy and hard due to its high water content, as it often does in commercial ice cream. If you don't mind that texture, then by all means, add it—just keep the pieces small. As for cooking the peaches, simply cut up some peeled peaches and cook them over low heat in a small saucepan with a pinch of sugar until they begin to soften and break down, about 12 minutes.

Thumbs down

I've subscribed to *Fine Cooking* since the beginning and have rolled with the changes to this excellent publication. Sometimes it takes a bit of time to appreciate change, so I've given your latest incarnation a fair shot. I really want to like the new layout, but sadly I cannot get on board. The magazine is undoubtedly prettier, with plenty of pictures and a flashy layout, but harder to read. It is easy to flip through and look at the pictures, but I am rarely drawn to the text. Quality content has always separated *Fine Cooking* from the rest of the pack, which offer flash but little substance. Please keep it solid for the serious cooks who have loved your magazine over the years.

—Peter Rauch, via email

Thumbs up

I love your new look. I have read and subscribed to *Fine Cooking* for several years and I was surprised to see the negative reviews of your new format in the letters section. The pictures are great, the content as good as ever, and I found as many or more inspiring ideas that I can't wait to try. I was especially happy to see the Make It Tonight section. Thanks for the revamp and continued great magazine.

—Colleen Cairncross, via email

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CONTRIBUTORS



Ed Schoenfeld ("Party in the Kitchen," page 62) is a restaurateur, Chinese food expert, and restaurant consultant who lives in Brooklyn. He is currently

working with restaurateur Jeffrey Chodorow on Foodparc, a new European-style food hall scheduled to open in New York next spring.

- **My favorite food memory is...** making blintzes with my grandmother, eating two for every three I made.
- **The last thing I ate was...** a salami and scrambled egg sandwich on a roll.
- **My last meal would have to be...** foie gras, sea urchin, an aged porterhouse, and a perfect white peach.



Food writer, blogger, and cooking teacher **Domenica Marchetti** ("Get Saucy!," page 54) specializes in seasonal Italian home cooking. Her writing has appeared

in *The Washington Post*, *Health*, and *Virginia Living*, among other publications. She has written two cookbooks and is working on her third, which will be about pasta.

- **Scrambled eggs or fried?... Can I say poached?**
- **My latest food discovery is...** cooking in a tagine.
- **My guilty food pleasure is...** steak fat.



Food scientist and cooking teacher **Bonnie Gorder-Hinchey** ("Feta," page 70) has more than 25 years of experience developing recipes and food products for companies such as Nestlé and General Mills. She teaches culinary, nutrition, and science classes at The Art Institute of Seattle.

- **My favorite spice is...** li hing mui (dried salted plum) because it's sweet, salty, and tangy all at once.
- **My favorite cookbook is...** anything from the early 1900s.
- **My latest food discovery is...** the smoker. We smoke everything.



Elizabeth Karmel ("Grilling Shellfish," page 42) is the executive chef of Hill Country in New York City. She teaches cooking classes and writes for

several national publications. Her most recent cookbook, *Soaked, Slathered, and Seasoned: A Complete Guide to Flavoring Food for the Grill*, was published this past spring.

- **The strangest thing I've ever eaten is...** iguana in Oaxaca, Mexico.
- **My go-to weeknight dinner is...** what I call my back-pocket dinner—beer can chicken, grilled sweet potato chips, and grilled asparagus.
- **My favorite thing about my job is...** that it doesn't feel like a job.



Brian Preston-Campbell (stylist for "Cold Comfort," page 50) is a food stylist, writer, and the former sous chef at Mesa Grill in New York City. He was the food

stylist for *Good Spirits*, which won a 2007 IACP award for food photography and styling, and he is the author of *Cool Waters: 50 Refreshing, Healthy Homemade Thirst-Quenchers*.

- **To a summer cookout, I would bring...** some of my homemade Irish draft ale.
- **The dish I most want to learn to cook is...** Texas barbecue beef brisket.
- **For breakfast, I eat...** chocolate chip waffles.



Mikey Price ("Eggplant Parmigiana," page 76) is the executive chef and owner of Market Table in New York City. He has cooked in many top New York restaurant kitchens, including The Harrison and The Mermaid Inn.

- **The last thing I cooked was...** honeydew gazpacho.
- **The dish I most want to learn to cook is...** authentic paella.
- **My favorite thing about my job is...** the immediate gratification I get from a full, happy dining room.



Eugenia Bone ("Summer Berries," page 18) is a cookbook author, food writer, and recipe developer who has written for *The New York Times*, *ForbesLife*, and

Sunset. Her latest book, *Well-Preserved*, came out in May. She also writes a food blog of the same name for *The Denver Post*.

- **My favorite food memory is...** summer evenings in Provincetown gathering moon snails. My dad would cook them with olive oil, parsley, and lots of garlic.
- **My drink of choice is...** a Gibson martini with vodka and a little extra onion juice.
- **My culinary icon is...** my dad, Edward Giobbi.



Lew Bryson ("Beer Cocktails," page 32) is a beer and spirits writer who lives near Philadelphia. He is the author of four brewery travel guides and the managing

editor of *Malt Advocate* magazine.

- **The strangest thing I ever drank was...** 60-year-old dandelion wine. It was like sunlight on the tongue.
- **I am currently obsessed with...** mustard. I have 26 mustards in my house right now, two of which I made myself.
- **My drink of choice is...** that I choose to have a drink.



Belgian illustrator **Aude Van Ryn** ("Lettuce Alone," page 22) works regularly for *The Guardian* as well as other international publications. She lives

and works in London and exhibits at galleries around the world, including London, Brussels, and Tokyo.

- **My favorite ice cream flavor is...** my dad's lime sorbet. It's hard to get through the summer without it.
- **I'm currently obsessed with...** dried mangos. As soon as I open a pack, they're gone.
- **My last meal would have to be...** I don't want to think about that.

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- How to set up your grill
- The differences between lump and briquette charcoal
- How to grill the perfect steak
- Real barbecue ribs and pork shoulder from your own backyard.

Future classes will include Knife Skills and Mastering Pies and Tarts.

Winner's Spotlight

Congratulations to Denise Jones and Veronica Vadakan, winners of our two recent online cooking challenges: Make It Mini and Waste Not.

For **Make It Mini**, cooks were asked to submit photos of dishes they had shrunk in size. Denise generated so many creative ideas for mini treats, it was hard to pick just one, but her chocolate cupcakes with lemon-grass frosting were a standout. She wins a *Fine Cooking* Archive DVD, a copy of Ellie Krieger's *The Food You Crave* cookbook, and a Kyocera ceramic knife.

In the **Waste Not** challenge, we asked users to create dishes from the odds and ends that normally get thrown out or go bad before they can be used up. Veronica made a salad of dandelion greens, hard-cooked eggs, and bacon. She wins a \$200 gift card to metrokitchen.com.

Look for other CooksTalk Challenges on Fine Cooking.com's home page, for more chances to win.



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TRY THIS

Tomatillos

THIS DISTANT RELATIVE of the tomato is a staple of Mexican cooking, lending a tart, zesty flavor to sauces and salsas. Previously available only in Latin-American markets, tomatillos are now popping up in grocery stores across the country. Here's why you should try them.

What they are

Small, round fruits encased in a delicate, papery husk, tomatillos ripen to various colors, from yellow to red to purple. But

they're most flavorful if harvested just before ripening, when they're vibrant green. Indigenous to Mexico and Central America, tomatillos ("little tomatoes" in Spanish) are also called husk tomatoes or *tomates verdes* (green tomatoes).

Why we love them

It's hard to resist their tangy, almost citrusy flavor, which turns slightly sweet with cooking.

Continued on page 16



TRY THIS TOMATILLOS

Tomatillos are a perfect match for chile peppers, onions, and cilantro—all key ingredients in salsa verde, a popular Mexican sauce for grilled meats and fish. Tomatillos are also good with avocados, corn, lime, and scallions.

How to buy and store them

Look for firm fruits without blemishes and with their papery husks firmly attached. When fresh, tomatillos are a vibrant green

color. Don't buy ones that have turned a yellowish green, as they're past their prime. Store tomatillos in their husks in a paper bag and refrigerate for up to a week.

How to cook with them

To prep tomatillos, peel the husk and rinse off the sticky residue it leaves behind. You don't need to remove the seeds. If eaten raw, tomatillos can be a little acidic and sharp-

tasting (sometimes a good thing). When cooked, their flavor tends to mellow, letting their sweeter side shine. Toss raw chopped tomatillos in salads, or roast or grill them whole and add them to salsas and dips. You can also cut them into wedges before stirring into stews and braises, or sauté them in small chunks and add them to omelets or scrambled eggs.

—Melissa Pellegrino

margarita-marinated skirt steak with grilled tomatillo salsa



Serves 4 to 6

FOR THE STEAK

- 2 limes
- ⅓ cup tequila
- ⅓ cup canola oil
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 Tbs. Cointreau
- 2 medium cloves garlic, minced
- ⅛ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 lb. skirt steak
- Kosher salt

FOR THE SALSA

- 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more for the grill
- 1 lb. tomatillos (10 to 15), husked and rinsed
- 1 medium yellow bell pepper
- Kosher salt
- ½ ripe medium avocado, diced
- 2 Tbs. minced red onion
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and minced
- Freshly ground black pepper

MARINATE THE STEAK

Finely grate the zest from 1 lime and put it in a 9x13-inch baking dish. Finely grate 1 tsp. zest from the second lime and set aside for the salsa. Juice the limes. Add ⅓ cup juice to the zest in the baking dish and mix 1 tsp. juice into the zest for the salsa.

To the baking dish, add the tequila, oil, cilantro, Cointreau, garlic, and pepper flakes; whisk to combine. Season the steak all over with ½ tsp. salt. Add it to the marinade and turn to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 2 hours, turning the steak after 1 hour.

MAKE THE SALSA

Prepare a medium gas or charcoal grill fire. Scrub the grill grate with a wire brush and then wipe clean with a paper towel dipped in oil.

Rub the tomatillos and yellow pepper all over with the 1 Tbs. oil and season with ½ tsp. salt. Grill the tomatillos, turning occasionally, until they have good grill marks and are starting to collapse, about 6 minutes. Grill the pepper, turning occasionally, until charred all over, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer the tomatillos to a plate and let cool. Put the pepper in a small bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Let sit until cool enough to handle.

Roughly chop the tomatillos and put them in a medium bowl. Peel the skin from the pepper, remove the seeds, and cut into small dice. Add the pepper to the tomatillos along with the avocado, onion, cilantro, jalapeño, and the reserved lime zest and juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

GRILL THE STEAK

Remove the steak from the marinade and pat it dry. Clean and oil the grill grates again. Grill the steak, covered, over medium heat until brown grill marks form on one side, about 5 minutes. Flip and cook until medium rare (130°F on an instant-read thermometer), 4 to 5 minutes more. Transfer to a cutting board and let rest for 5 minutes. Cut each steak crosswise into 2 or 3 pieces, and then thinly slice across the grain. Serve with the salsa on the side.

Make ahead: The salsa may be prepared up to 2 hours ahead.



WHAT WE'RE COOKING NOW

Figs, Summer Squash, and Nectarines

Nine ways to use three seasonal ingredients we can't get enough of. *Fine Cooking* editors share some delicious ideas.



Figs



Marsala-baked figs

For an easy dessert, arrange whole figs in a shallow baking dish and add about ½ inch of sweet

Marsala. Bake at 350°F, basting occasionally with the Marsala, until heated through. Serve drizzled with the Marsala and a little honey. Top with a dollop of half mascarpone and half heavy cream lightly sweetened and whipped to soft peaks.

—Jennifer Armentrout

Fig and grape compote

Simmer chopped figs and whole seeded Concord grapes (dig the seeds out with the tip of a paring knife) in a saucepan with a little red wine and some sugar until very soft and jammy. Serve with seared pork chops or as part of a cheese platter.

—Sarah Breckenridge



Figs with prosciutto and Parmigiano

Cut up a few small chunks of good Parmigiano and toss with a little aged

balsamic vinegar. Cut some ripe figs in half and arrange them on a platter along with the Parmigiano and a few paper-thin slices of prosciutto. If you like, drizzle a few more drops of balsamic over the figs.

—Laura Giannatempo

Summer Squash



Fettuccine with squash ribbons

Slice yellow and green squash in long, thin ribbons with a vegetable peeler or a mandoline. Then sauté some chopped sweet onions in olive oil until soft, add the squash, and cook until tender. Toss the mixture with cooked fettuccine and sprinkle with chopped fresh parsley.

—Melissa Pellegrino



Greek-style stuffed squash

Cut zucchini or yellow squash in half and scoop out some of the flesh.

Bake in a 375°F oven until soft and starting to brown. Then fill with a mixture of sautéed ground lamb, chopped black olives, oregano, and a little tomato sauce. Top with crumbled feta and broil until browned on top.

—Sarah Breckenridge



Squash fritters

Grate 2 medium squash and let drain for 20 minutes. In a large bowl, whisk three beaten eggs with about

¾ cup flour, then mix in some crumbled feta or chèvre, the squash, and chopped fresh mint. Season with salt and pepper and thin with a little milk to a thick batter. Cook table-spoonfuls of batter in a hot oiled pan until golden brown on both sides. Serve with thick yogurt and harissa.

—Lisa Waddle



Nectarines

Spicy grilled nectarine salsa

Cut the nectarines in half, remove the pit, rub with olive oil, and grill over medium-high heat until soft and lightly browned. Then cut them into small dice and toss with diced red onion, minced habanero, chopped cilantro, and a vinaigrette of oil, lime juice, and honey. The salsa is great over seared scallops or grilled fish.

—Melissa Pellegrino



Nectarine ice cubes

Peel and pit the nectarines, slice them into wedges, and freeze in a single layer on a baking sheet. Once

frozen, transfer to a plastic bag for easy storage. You can use the frozen nectarines to chill iced tea, fruit juices, or summer cocktails.

—Denise Mickelsen

Nectarines with Maraschino

Peel, pit, and cut the nectarines in wedges. Stir together some wine, Maraschino (a dry liqueur made with *marasca* sour cherries), and sugar, using about 2 Tbs. sugar for each 1 Tbs. of wine and liqueur. Add a squeeze of lemon juice. Macerate the nectarines in this mixture for at least 2 hours. Serve with fresh raspberries and a dollop of mascarpone or honeyed whipped cream.

—Laura Giannatempo





PRESERVING THE SEASON

Summer Berries

Turn the season's bounty into surprisingly versatile syrups.

BY EUGENIA BONE

FRESH, SWEET BERRIES ARE ONE OF SUMMER'S GREAT PLEASURES. Their season is short, so now is the time to buy them with abandon and make all those fruit salads and berry desserts you've been craving. Then turn them into delicious syrups and enjoy them for months to come. The technique is simple and with the master recipe, at right, you can make a syrup out of just about any berry.

Berry syrups are terrific on pancakes and ice cream or stirred into plain yogurt, rice pudding, and oatmeal. Or try brushing them over baked ham or a pork roast to create a sweet, fruity glaze. And for a delicious homemade soda, add one part syrup to two parts chilled seltzer water.

fresh berry syrup

This master recipe works well with a variety of summer berries. The thickness of the syrup will depend on the berries you use: Some are juicier, resulting in a thinner syrup, while others, like blueberries, have more pectin, yielding a thicker syrup. This method is for fridge storage only. To extend the shelf life, see the canning directions, opposite.

Yields 1 to 2 cups

3 cups fresh berries (such as blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, or blackberries), washed and trimmed as needed and halved if large

1-2 cups granulated sugar

Bring water to boil in a large pot fitted with a rack. Carefully, put 2 empty half-pint (8 fl. oz.) Mason jars and their lids and screw-on bands in the water and boil for 10 minutes to sterilize them. Remove the jars, lids, and bands with tongs and set on paper towels to drain.

In a medium heavy-duty saucepan, crush the berries with a potato masher. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water (if using strawberries, add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water). Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, reduce the heat to medium low, and simmer until the berries are very soft and juicy, about 5 minutes.

Set a fine sieve over a bowl. Pour the berry pulp into the sieve and allow the juice to drip through. Gently press the pulp with a rubber spatula to extract as much juice as possible, but don't press so hard that you force the pulp through.

Clean the saucepan. Measure the juice and then pour it into the saucepan. For every $\frac{1}{4}$ cup juice, add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until the syrup is viscous but still runny, about 1 minute. Skim the foam with a spoon and pour the syrup into the sterilized jars. Put the jars on a wire rack and let cool to room temperature. Screw the lids and bands on and refrigerate the syrup for up to 2 weeks.

If the syrup thickens during storage, stir to loosen it before serving. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Flavor Twists

For a slightly more sophisticated syrup, try these flavor variations:

Lemon Blueberry

Add $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. finely grated lemon zest to blueberry syrup while still hot.

Raspberry Mint

Crush three sprigs fresh mint with the berries when making raspberry syrup.

Blackberry Thyme

Crush three sprigs fresh thyme with the berries when making blackberry syrup.

Strawberry Balsamic

Add balsamic vinegar to strawberry syrup ($\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. per $\frac{1}{2}$ cup syrup) while still hot.



For a video on canning, go to FineCooking.com/extras.

Canning Berry Syrups

IT'S EASY TO PRESERVE FRESH BERRY SYRUPS so they last well into the fall and winter months. All it takes is a quick sterilization of a few clean jars before you pour in the syrup, screw on the lids, and briskly boil for a few minutes. Here's the simple method, step by step.

The Method

If you're going through the extra step of canning, consider making a double batch; you'll have lots of syrup for your cold-weather pantry.



Bring water to a boil in a large pot fitted with a rack insert. Carefully put 4 empty half-cup (4 fl. oz.) Mason jars (use 8 if you're doubling the recipe) or 2 empty half-pint (8 fl. oz.) Mason jars (use 4 if you're doubling the recipe) and their metal screw-on bands in the water and reduce the heat to a simmer; simmer until ready to use. Heat the lids in very hot water for 5 minutes to soften the flange. (Don't boil the lids when canning, as it might damage them and compromise the seal later.)



Remove the jars and rims with tongs, emptying the water from the jars **1**. Pour the syrup into the jars **2**, leaving about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of headroom. Wipe the rims clean of any spilled syrup and affix the metal lids onto the jars with the screw bands. Turn the bands only fingertip tight; don't close them as tight as you can, or you may compromise the seal.

Put the jars in the pot fitted with the rack insert and add enough water to cover by 2 inches. Bring to a boil over high heat, and boil briskly for 10 minutes.



Transfer the jars to a rack. Allow them to cool for 12 to 24 hours. You should hear a popping sound as the vacuum seals the lid to the jar. When the syrup is completely cool, check the seals by pressing on the lids **3**. The lids should be taut and pulled down toward the inside of the jar. If a lid bounces when you press on it, the seal is imperfect, and you will have to repeat the canning process with a new lid, or simply refrigerate the syrup and use within two weeks. You can also remove the bands and try to pick up the jars by holding onto the rim of the lids. If the lids are tight, your seal is good **4**.



Keep the bands in place when transporting the jars, but you do not need to store them with the bands on. Store in a cool, dark place for up to a year. Once a jar is opened, refrigerate the syrup for up to 2 weeks.

Eugenia Bone is the author of Well-Preserved, published last May.

Canning Tool Box

The only special tools you need for canning berry syrup are Mason jars and a canning rack (see Where to Buy It, page 93). You can reuse jars and bands that are not chipped or dented, but always use new lids (the flat metal disk with the rubberized flange).





BIG BUY COOKING

French Bread

Making the most of a favorite food find from a warehouse store. **BY PAM ANDERSON**

THE LURE OF A CRUSTY, freshly baked French loaf—or two (yes, most big box stores sell them in pairs)—is irresistible. But two pounds of bread is a lot to go through, no matter how many sandwiches, crostini, or breadcrumbs you make. The trick is to have a stash of delicious recipes that use it up in creative ways, like a gingery summer berry trifle or a chilled fresh tomato and bread soup with basil that's like summer in a bowl.

The Big Buy

What: French bread (two-pack)

How much: 2 lb.

How to store: Keep leftover bread in gallon-size zip-top freezer bags at room temperature for up to two days. This way, the crumb stays fresh longer; the crust will soften, but it will quickly crisp up again if toasted or heated in a warm oven. To freeze bread, wrap it in foil and put it in zip-top bags. It will keep for up to a month.



chilled fresh tomato, basil, and bread soup

Bread helps thicken this lovely summer soup, and blanching the basil before puréeing helps its color stay fresh-looking.

Serves 6

½ lb. day-old French bread, crust removed, crumb cut into ¼-inch cubes (3 cups)

Kosher salt

1 cup lightly packed fresh basil leaves; more for garnish

2 lb. ripe tomatoes, cored and chopped (5 cups)

1 large clove garlic, roughly chopped

2 tsp. sherry vinegar

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Spread the bread cubes on a rimmed baking sheet and toast in the oven until lightly golden and crisp, about 15 minutes.

Bring a medium pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the basil and cook until wilted, about 30 seconds. Drain and run under cold water. Pat dry with paper towels and roughly chop.

In a blender, purée the basil, tomatoes, garlic, and 2 cups ice-cold water for about 45 seconds. Strain through a fine sieve to remove the solids and return the purée to the blender.

Add the bread, vinegar, and 2 tsp. salt and blend until puréed, about 2 minutes. The soup should be very smooth; if it's not, continue blending. Add the olive oil and process a few more seconds to combine. Divide among 6 soup bowls and garnish with basil sprigs, or refrigerate until ready to use. The soup can be refrigerated for up to 3 days.



plt salad

In this take on a BLT sandwich, prosciutto replaces bacon. Garlicky croutons are a delicious use for day-old bread.

Serves 6 to 8

- 7 oz. mixed salad greens, such as mesclun (10 lightly packed cups)
- 4 medium tomatoes, cored, cut into ¾-inch wedges (wedges halved crosswise if large), and lightly salted
- ½ cup fresh tender herb leaves, such as parsley, chives, chervil, tarragon, or a mix, torn or snipped if large
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 thin slices prosciutto (about 3 oz.), cut lengthwise into ½-inch strips
- 2 cloves garlic, smashed and peeled
- 6-7 oz. day-old French bread (with crust), cut into ½-inch cubes
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 tsp. fresh lemon juice

Put the greens, tomatoes, and herbs in a large salad bowl.

Heat ¼ cup of the olive oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the prosciutto and cook, stirring frequently, until crisp and slightly darker in color, 4 to 5 minutes. With tongs or a slotted spoon, transfer to a plate lined with paper towels. Add the garlic to the skillet and cook, turning occasionally, until golden brown, 30 seconds to 1 minute; discard the garlic. Add the bread and thyme to the skillet and cook, stirring occasionally, until crisp and golden brown, 4 to 5 minutes. Toss with salt and pepper to taste.

Add the bread and prosciutto to the salad bowl. Drizzle the salad with the remaining ¼ cup olive oil and the lemon juice, and toss well. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve.

summer berry trifle

Use any type of berry you like—just make sure you choose the ripest, tastiest ones available. The bread will soak up all their sweet juices.

Serves 10 to 12

- 1½ quarts mixed fresh berries (hull and quarter strawberries), plus extra berries for garnish
- ¾ cup plus 1 Tbs. granulated sugar
- 4 tsp. minced fresh ginger
- 1 lb. day-old French bread, crusts removed, crumb cut into ½-inch cubes (5 to 6 cups)
- ½ cup Grand Marnier or Cointreau
- 1½ cups heavy cream

Heat the berries and ¾ cup of the sugar in a 4-quart saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until they start to release juice but are still whole and intact, about 5 minutes. Stir in the ginger and pour the mixture onto a rimmed baking sheet to cool.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, toss the bread with 5 Tbs. of the liqueur. In a chilled metal bowl with chilled beaters, whip the cream with the remaining 3 Tbs. liqueur and 1 Tbs. sugar to almost-stiff peaks.

In a 2- to 2½-quart clear glass bowl, layer in the following order: 1 mounded cup of bread cubes, 1 cup of berries and juices, and 1 cup of whipped cream. Repeat 3 times—you should



have 12 layers total. For the final layers, use all the remaining bread, berries (and their juices), and whipped cream.

Cover and refrigerate until the juice has completely softened the bread, at least 4 hours or overnight. Garnish with fresh berries before serving.

Pam Anderson is a Fine Cooking contributing editor. Her latest cookbook is The Perfect Recipe for Losing Weight and Eating Great.

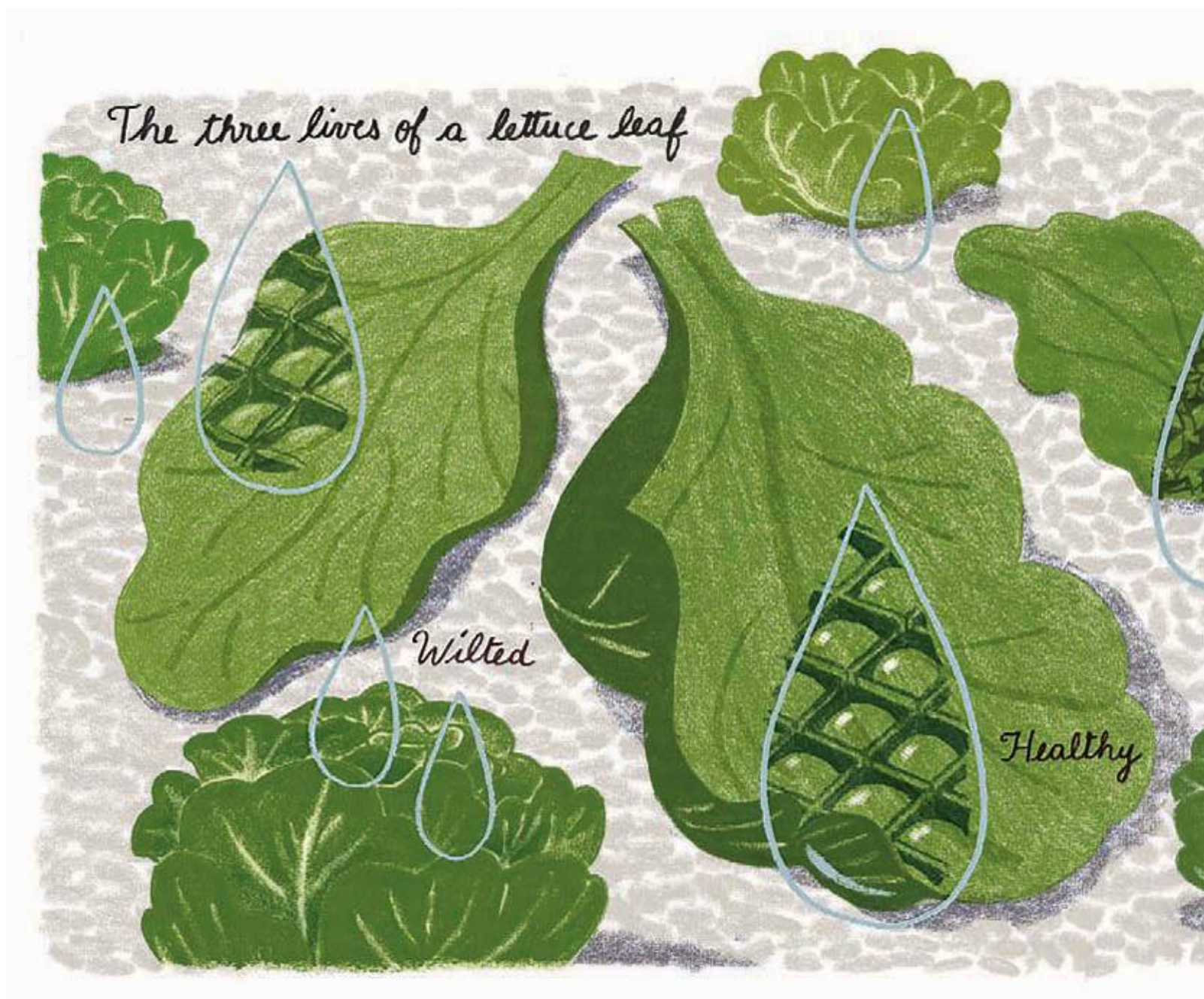
NEWS BITES

The organic choice

In an ideal world, we'd buy all organic, all the time. But the reality of the wallet means having to make choices. **The Environmental Working Group** comes to the rescue with a pocket guide of the dozen fruits and vegetables you should always buy organic, because they are the most pesticide-contaminated. Topping the list: peaches and apples. The guide also includes a list of the 15 fruits and vegetables with the lowest pesticide residue, including onions, tomatoes, and broccoli. Go to ewg.org.

Unshackle the wine

Did you know that shipping your favorite Cabernet to a cousin in Kentucky could be a crime? All but 13 states have significant restrictions on sending wine across state borders. **Free the Grapes** is a national grass-roots coalition founded by United States-based wineries that wants to change that through state-by-state legislation. Find out more about this emerging crusade at freethgrapes.org.



Keeping Fresh Greens Fresh

The science of cell structure helps explain why good lettuce goes bad. **BY BRIAN GEIGER**

IN THE DAILY STRUGGLE to eat healthfully, salads make it easy. They're economical, quick, and, because they're so easy to customize, almost always delicious.

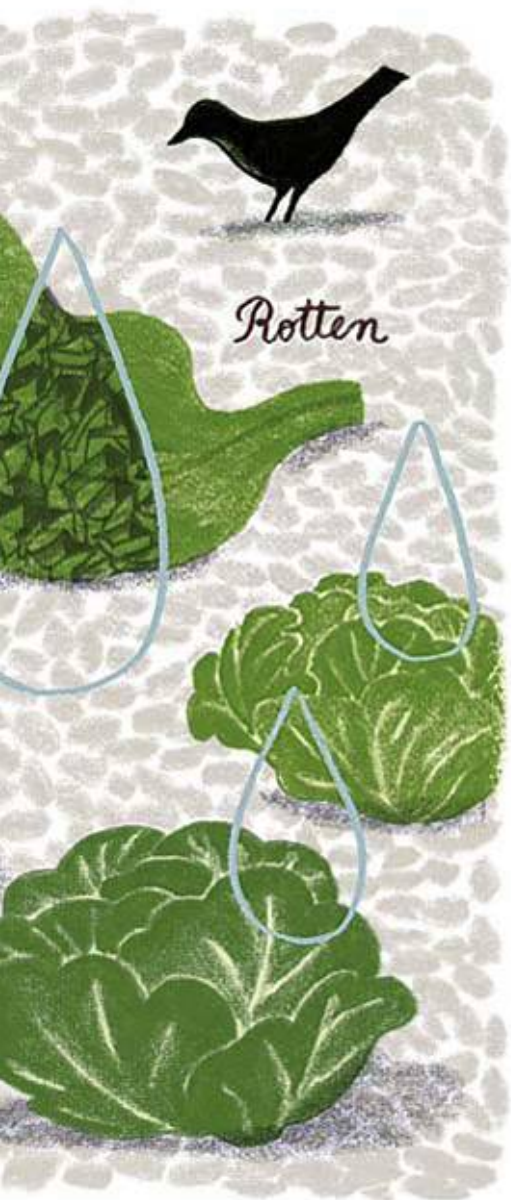
The hard part is dealing with the disappointment of opening the crisper drawer and discovering wilted leaves. Or worse, a pool of green sludge. That's a quick way to discourage a nice graze. It's not difficult to keep lettuce happy; in some cases, you can even bring it back from the brink. But first you have to understand what's going on inside those leaves.

Under the microscope

Leaves are nature's solar panels, and salad greens are no different. The career goal of a leaf is to have as much surface area as possible with the minimum amount of volume, in order to capture sunlight, absorb carbon dioxide, and release oxygen. There's not a lot of extra structure, and for that reason, leaves are tender and delicate. The stems are the crunchy bit, because they are the internal pipes of plants: They facilitate

the exchange of nutrients between the leaves and the roots.

The crispness and color of lettuce are determined by the health of its cells. Every plant cell is surrounded by a cell wall, which provides the structure that helps give greens their crisp texture. Inside the cell wall, a semipermeable cell membrane (think of it as a filter) allows the exchange of fluids and gasses that keep the cell alive and productive. At the same time, the membrane contains the various functional parts of the cell, like



chloroplasts, the little pockets inside each cell that hold chlorophyll and other chemicals. The chloroplasts' main job is to convert sunlight to chemical energy for the plant. It's also the chloroplasts that give lettuce its color—generally green or in the green-to-white range. Much of the volume of a cell is taken up by the cytoplasm and a sac called the vacuole, which holds most of the liquid that fills the cell. When plant cells are healthy and happy, the cells are filled to the brim with liquid, completing the structure that the cell wall started.

Pop goes the...lettuce

Sound confusing? Well, imagine a bunch of cardboard boxes with no tops or bottoms, all

set next to each other in a grid. Inside each box is a balloon that can fill the box. If the balloons are filled so that they push against the sides of the boxes, you can squeeze the box structure and it's not going anywhere. If you squeeze hard enough, though, some of the balloons will pop. That pressure is what gives lettuce and other vegetables their crispness. By the same token, as lettuce ages, its cells leak liquid, which causes it to wilt.

Know when to fold 'em

The good news is that lettuce is designed to pull in nutrients from its surface. That makes it pretty easy to fix if you've let it wilt. Just soak the lettuce in cold water for a half-hour or so, and suddenly it's rejuvenated.

The cold-water trick is not magical, though. It won't heal rotting bits, it won't reverse cellular damage, and it won't get rid of damage from bacteria. So your lettuce still has to be in essentially good shape, even if it isn't crisp, before it can be resurrected.

How to tell? If a portion of the lettuce is much darker green or brown, if it's liquid rather than solid, or if it just doesn't look like lettuce anymore, throw in the towel. If it looks pretty much like lettuce except that it's limp, then you have a candidate for resuscitation.

As long as lettuce cells are whole, the lettuce is in good shape. Remember the balloon analogy? If the balloon is deflated but intact, no worries. However, if the balloon has popped, there's nothing you can do to fix it. You want to break up the cells when you're eating the lettuce, not when you're storing it.

Back, you bacteria

The two biggest threats to cell walls are physical stress and being exposed to liquid for too long. Physical stress because it directly damages the cell walls and makes them susceptible to bacteria, and water because it is a breeding ground for bacteria.

A cell's cytoplasm and vacuole contain all sorts of nutritious goodies. This is great for humans, since that's one of the reasons we eat salads. The flip side is that nutrition is also good for bacteria. Because bacteria are lacking in "chewing" and "puncturing" skills, they can't easily break through cell walls. But when cell walls become damaged, bacteria can move in and have a feast. And

bacteria are not on anyone's list of good salad components.

So buy salad greens that show no signs of damage. Rinse them just before eating, and handle them gently. A vigorous cleaning can cause damage from handling or by scraping dirt or sand across the leaves. Don't cut or tear the greens before you're ready to eat them.

Let's spend a moment on the tearing-versus-cutting debate. Some experts advise tearing greens into bite-size pieces, on the principle that cutting will damage the cells, while tearing will occur naturally between the cell walls without damaging the membranes. Others insist you should cut greens because in tearing them apart, you squeeze cells with your fingers, causing the cells to burst. I say: It doesn't matter. Just be as gentle as you can as close to eating time as you can.

Sound advice

Storage is much less controversial. Keep greens in an airtight container in the refrigerator. It's a good idea to wrap them in paper towels to absorb excess moisture (remember, too much water breeds bacteria) and to keep the leaves from touching the plastic directly (to prevent condensation).

Understanding your salad greens will help you keep them fresh, and keeping them fresh will help ensure that you'll eat them regularly. That will make you healthier, happier, and generally a better person. Between that and the fresh taste of a good salad, what more do you need?

Brian Geiger is a robotics project manager who explores the mysteries of food science here and in his blog at FineCooking.com.

crisp tips

- Store lettuce whole (uncut and untern); it will last longer.
- Wrap lettuce in paper towels and keep in an airtight container in the fridge.
- Soak greens in cold water before serving to fill their cells with any water they've lost in their journey from field to table, making them as crisp as possible.



REPertoire

HOW TO MAKE

The Classic Omelet

A breakfast standard every cook should be able to prepare. BY ALLISON EHRI KREITLER

A CLASSIC FRENCH OMELET is pale on the outside (no browning at all) and creamy—ever so slightly undercooked inside. Although it's a simple egg dish, you do

have to pay attention to a few key steps to get it just right. With our basic recipe and step-by-step photos, you'll be on your way to delicious results in no time.

Step by Step to the Perfect Omelet



1 Cook until just set around the edge.



2 Scramble gently.



3 Turn off the heat as soon as the bottom has set.



4 Sprinkle the cheese down the middle.



5 Fold one-third of the omelet toward the center.



6 Fold again and flip onto a plate.

Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Jennifer Armentrout, except right, Micheli Knauer

Tool Box

The simple utensils needed for omelets are essential to any well-stocked kitchen:

- 8-inch nonstick skillet
- silicone spatula

cheese omelet

If you prefer firmer eggs or if undercooked eggs are a concern, cook the omelet for another minute before adding the cheese. It will get a little brown, but the eggs will be cooked through.

Serves 1

- ½ Tbs. unsalted butter; more as needed
- 2 large eggs
- ¼ tsp. sea salt or kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup loosely packed grated Gruyère

Melt the butter in an 8-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat.

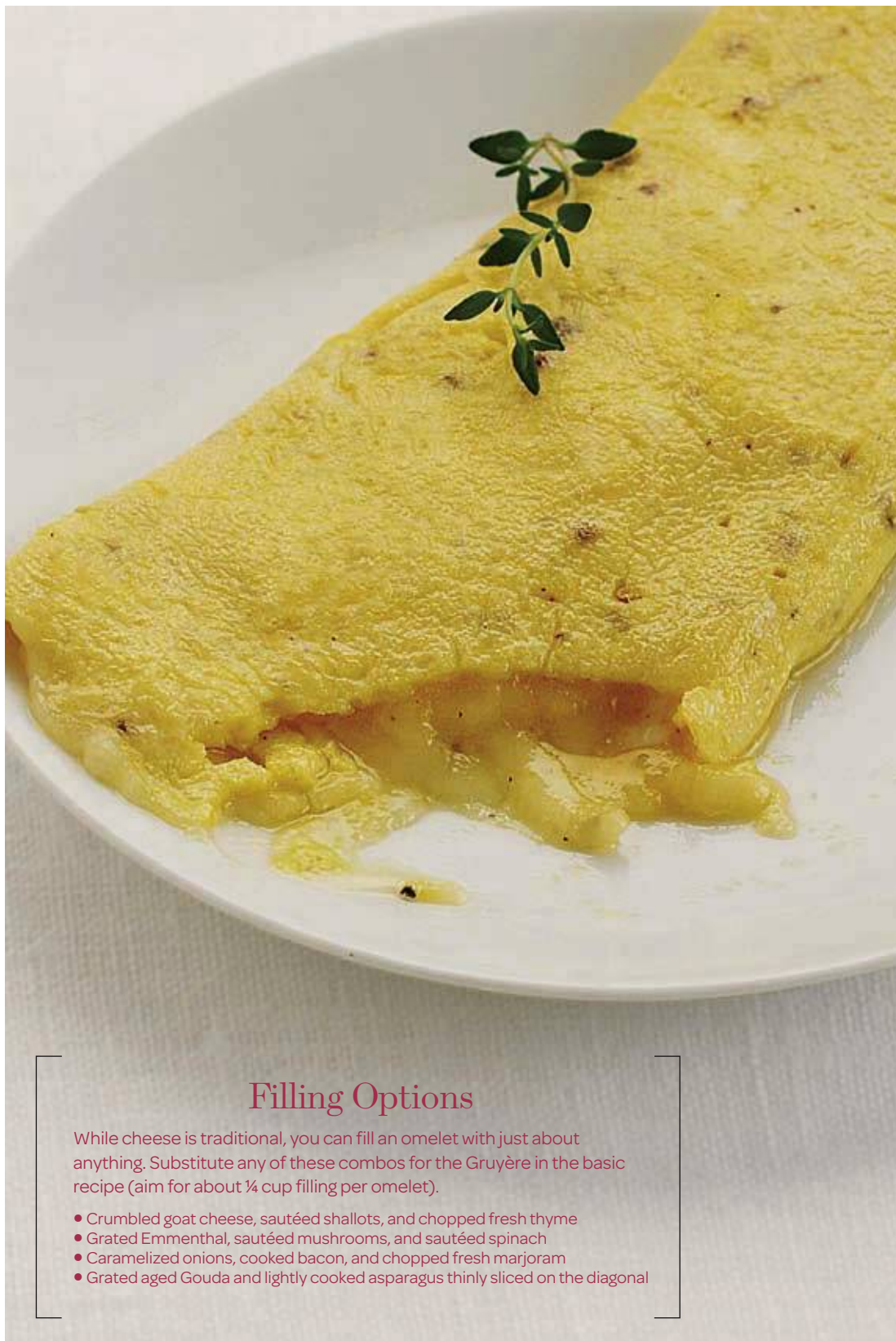
In a small bowl, lightly beat the eggs, salt, and a couple of grinds of pepper with a fork until the whites and yolks are completely mixed and the eggs are frothy. Pour the eggs into the skillet and let them sit, undisturbed, until the eggs are just beginning to set around the edges, 30 to 60 seconds **1**.

Gently scramble the eggs with a silicone spatula while shaking the pan back and forth **2**. Scramble and shake just until the eggs have set on the bottom but are still undercooked on top, 45 to 60 seconds **3**. Turn off the heat and give the pan a few shakes to evenly distribute the eggs. Tap it once firmly on the stove to smooth the bottom of the omelet (use a heatproof cutting board if your stovetop is glass).

Sprinkle the cheese down the center third of the omelet **4** and run a spatula around the edge. You can use the spatula to smooth the top of the eggs if necessary. Let it sit for about 1 minute. The top of the omelet will still be loose and the bottom should have no color.

Fold a third of the omelet over the cheese **5**. Shake the unfolded third of the omelet up the side and slightly out of the pan. Invert the pan onto a plate to complete the final fold of the omelet **6**. It should be folded in three, like a letter. Rub the top with cold butter for shine, if desired. Serve immediately.

Allison Ehri Kreidler is a Fine Cooking contributing editor.



Filling Options

While cheese is traditional, you can fill an omelet with just about anything. Substitute any of these combos for the Gruyère in the basic recipe (aim for about ¼ cup filling per omelet).

- Crumbled goat cheese, sautéed shallots, and chopped fresh thyme
- Grated Emmenthal, sautéed mushrooms, and sautéed spinach
- Caramelized onions, cooked bacon, and chopped fresh marjoram
- Grated aged Gouda and lightly cooked asparagus thinly sliced on the diagonal



GO SHOPPING

Great Finds

Our latest buys for the kitchen and table. BY DENISE MICKELSEN

Cool Tools

Swedish designer Jesper Stahl's kitchen tool collection is made from a glass-nylon blend, so each piece is lightweight, high-heat resistant, and nonstick. Now available in two new colors, titan silver and pacific blue, as well as in olive, tomato, and black. **\$4 to \$14 at kitchenart.com; 800-239-8090.**



Good to Grow

Perfect for the gardener-cook in your life, these lovely handmade seedpaper recipe bookmarks can be planted to grow fresh parsley, chives, basil, dill, or cilantro. Instructions and a recipe included. **\$3.50 each at seedpapers.com; 505-989-7707.**



Fruit Forward

Global Gardens' delicious fruit Champagne vinegars are made with sparkling wine from Napa Valley's Domaine Chandon and real fruit purées (pomegranate, strawberry, and blood orange, to name a few). They're great in vinaigrettes, marinades, and sauces. **\$14 to \$20 at oliverevolution.com; 800-307-0447.**



Splurge Worthy

Demeyere, the high-end Belgian cookware brand, has partnered with UK architect John Pawson to create a sophisticated new line of pots and pans. Each piece is engineered for its specific task (sauté, boil, or sear), and Pawson's modern design makes this line as beautiful as it is functional. Shown, 2.3-quart saucepot with lid, **\$295. Other pieces, \$280 to \$420 at bloomingdales.com; 800-777-0000.**



Take It to Go

Sagaform's new portable, folding charcoal grill means you can cook out anytime, anywhere. It's a modest 11 by 11 inches, and comes with its own shoulder bag for easy carrying. **\$40 at halls.com; 888-425-5722.**



One of a Kind

Chicago-based artist and designer Susan Dwyer makes her ethereal gold-edged ceramic dinnerware by hand—no molds allowed in her studio—so each piece is unique. **\$12 to \$52 at upintheairsomewhere.com.**





BOOKS THAT COOK

The Reading List

New must-buys for food lovers. BY KIMBERLY Y. MASIBAY

Rustic Fruit Desserts

Crumbles, Buckles, Cobblers, Pandowdies, and More

by Cory Schreiber and Julie Richardson

(Ten Speed Press, \$22)

They say you can't judge a book by its cover, but I took one look at the luscious cobbler on the front of this slim volume and pretty much made up my mind. Happily, my intuition was spot on. This book is a pleasure.

The authors—two of Portland, Oregon's, most beloved chefs—deliver 70 unfussy recipes for good old-fashioned desserts. Most of them you'll want to devour promptly, but at the height of summer, when you've got fresh fruit up to your ears, the authors suggest keeping unbaked crisp or crumble toppings on hand in your freezer—then just bring home the fruit, and dessert is a snap.

Goat Song

A Seasonal Life, a Short History of Herding, and the Art of Making Cheese

by Brad Kessler

(Scribner, \$24)

About a decade ago, novelist Brad Kessler and his wife moved to a 75-acre farm in the moun-

tains of Vermont, where they planned to raise dairy goats. The couple knew nothing of goat herding, let alone living by nature's rules, so each day brought its share of dismay, discovery, and delight. In this spellbinding memoir, Kessler chronicles his adventures and his transformation from urban writer to artisan cheesemaker, while also gracefully weaving in historical musings that illuminate the pastoral roots of our modern world. Fascinating, poetic, and erudite, this is a book that beckons the reader to return to its pages time and again.

The New Portuguese Table

Exciting Flavors from Europe's Western Coast

by David Leite

(Clarkson Potter, \$32.50)

When award-winning food writer David Leite journeyed to Portugal to explore his native cuisine, he was struck by how different it was from the rustic Portuguese food he'd been raised on in New Jersey. Since his father's emigration in the 1950s, new ingredients and cooking techniques have flooded Portugal. Modern chefs are reinterpreting classic

fare to delicious effect, borrowing flavors from India, Asia, and Africa. In the hands of one witty chef, for example, chicken in a pot becomes an aromatic grilled dish that Leite dubs Chicken out of a Pot and onto the Grill. He spotlights this new Portuguese fare and rounds out his recipe collection with plenty of classic family favorites, like spicy Grilled Shrimp with Piri-Piri Sauce, a Portuguese beach shack standard.

The Big Sur Bakery Cookbook

A Year in the Life of a Restaurant

by Michelle and Philip Wojtowicz, and Michael Gilson with Catherine Price

(William Morrow, \$40)

Month by month, this magical book takes you through a year at a renowned restaurant perched along Highway 1 in rugged Big Sur, California. You'll find stunning photographs, essays about life in Big Sur, profiles of local purveyors, and a collection of inspiring monthly menus, with recipes. The Big Sur Bakery is all about down-to-earth fare made with the freshest, best ingredients, so many of the recipes in this book are remarkably simple. There's nothing difficult about

making Braised Green Garlic; or Whole Rockfish, Scored and Charred; or Grilled Prime Rib Steak; or Roasted Apricots. The challenge for the home cook is in finding top-notch seasonal ingredients and then letting them sing.

Fresh Mexico

100 Simple Recipes for True Mexican Flavor

by Marcela Valladolid

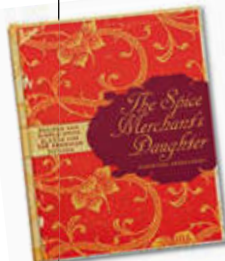
(Clarkson Potter, \$22.50)

Vibrant and deliciously feisty, the modern Mexican recipes in Marcela Valladolid's new cookbook are as irresistible as the young Tijuana-based chef herself. Valladolid is passionate about Mexican cuisine, but she's no stickler for tradition. Whether she's infusing an Indian technique with Mexican flavor (as in her Cilantro Tandoori Chicken), wrapping a tortilla around duck confit (for a Duck Burrito), or sneaking tequila into crème anglaise (for her Apricot-Tequila Ice Cream), Valladolid finds inspiration where others see culinary boundaries. Her accessible recipes emphasize fresh, easy-to-find ingredients and are perfect for summer—or anytime.

Kimberly Y. Masibay is a Fine Cooking contributing editor.



what we're reading now



The Spice Merchant's Daughter (Clarkson Potter, 2008), by cooking instructor Christina Arokiasamy, is a beautifully designed book that inspired me straight into the kitchen. Arokiasamy teaches how to buy, store, and cook with the spices, herbs, and chiles that she learned about from her mother, a spice trader and caring cook from Malaysia. I especially love her make-ahead spice pastes and rubs (or "cook's little helpers"), which are great for adding layers of flavor to simple home cooking. —Denise Mickelsen



THE GOOD LIFE

Less Is More

For nutritionist Ellie Krieger, eating less meat is a good idea, but summer cookouts can make that a challenge. She has a solution.

THE HEADY AROMA OF MEAT GRILLING over an open flame never fails to ignite my appetite. It's a built-in primal response, one that even my vegetarian friends admit to having. That intoxicating smell is the tease for the juicy, charred, succulent flavor payoff to come when it's time to dig in.

Trouble is, the kind and amount of meat we're used to tossing on the grill—fatty sausages, huge greasy burgers, and big marbled steaks—are, to be blunt, nutritional nightmares. They're loaded with bad-for-you fats that are strongly linked to heart disease and cancer, and those 12-ounce steaks are way too big for our own good. On the flip side, beef, pork, and lamb are packed with quality protein, key minerals like zinc and iron, as well as essential B vitamins. So what's a health-conscious carnivore to do? The answer is simple: Choose a lean cut of meat and eat less of it.

Go Lean In general, if it has the words "loin" or "round" in the name, the meat is lean. Beef sirloin, tenderloin, and bottom round are all lean grilling classics, as are tri-tip and flank steak. Pork tenderloin is nearly as lean as skinless chicken breast. And pork and lamb loin are good choices, too. Game steaks like venison are nearly fat-free and fantastic over an open flame. The key with all these cuts is to cook them to only medium doneness, because they'll dry out if overcooked.

Portion Control Once you have the right cut, the next step to eating meat sensibly is to control your portions. The nutritionally recommended portion of meat is 3 ounces per serving. The problem is that if you see it on a plate, it's downright depressing—about the size of a deck of cards. My trick is to make it *look* abundant. We eat with our eyes, so rather than place a puny steak on a plate, where it's dwarfed by the side dishes, slice the meat thinly and pile it up on a piece of grilled garlic bread to sop up the juices. Or serve it mounded over whole-grain tortillas as part of a steak taco dinner. Skewering chunks of meat along with vegetables or fruit, as I do in the Ancho-Marinated Pork and Mango Skewers here, is another great way to grill your meat but not eat too much of it. You



Serve it smart. For Ellie, a great way to eat less meat is to skewer it.

get the perfect protein portion, but your plate is dominated by two big, bountiful, meaty skewers. It's all the primal satisfaction you want with none of the downsides.





Good to Know

- **Shop right** Choose cuts of meat with the words “loin” or “round” in their names—they’re naturally lean.
- **Eat less** The nutritionally recommended portion of meat is 3 ounces per serving; that’s about the size of a deck of cards.
- **Serve smart** Trick the eye by making those 3 ounces look abundant: Slice the meat and pile it up on grilled bread, tortillas, or salad, or skewer big chunks with veggies or fruits.

ancho-marinated pork and mango skewers

If you can’t find ripe mangos, substitute pineapple.

Serves 4 (2 skewers per person)

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh orange juice
- 2 Tbs. fresh lime juice
- 2 Tbs. canola oil; more for the grill
- 2 tsp. dark brown sugar
- 2 tsp. pure ancho chile powder
- 2 medium cloves garlic, minced
- Pinch crushed red pepper flakes
- Kosher salt
- 1 lb. pork tenderloin, trimmed and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 medium ripe mangos, peeled, pitted, and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 8 skewers, 10 inches or longer, soaked in water for 30 minutes if wooden
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro

In a medium bowl, whisk the orange juice, lime juice, oil, sugar, ancho powder, garlic, pepper flakes, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt.

Add the pork, toss to coat, cover, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 4 hours.

Thread the pork and mango cubes onto the skewers, alternating them and beginning and ending with a piece of pork. Each skewer should have about 5 pieces of pork and 4 pieces of mango.

Prepare a medium gas or charcoal grill fire. Scrub the grill grate with a wire brush and then wipe clean with a paper towel dipped in oil. Cook the skewers, turning once, until the meat is browned on the outside but still slightly pink in the center, about 8 minutes. Serve garnished with the cilantro.

Registered dietitian Ellie Krieger is a Fine Cooking contributing editor.



Get more advice on fresh eating at FineCooking.com/fresh.



TEST DRIVE

Mandolines

This time-saving kitchen tool lets you slice, julienne, and crinkle-cut like a pro. These three are a cut above. **BY MARYELLEN DRISCOLL**

TRANSFORMING A FEW POUNDS OF POTATOES into thin, even rounds for a gratin or shaving paper-thin slices of raw fennel for a salad takes great knife skills, not to mention patience. The alternative? A mandoline. It easily turns fruits and vegetables into uniform slices or julienne sticks of almost any thickness and size with speed and precision. It's safer to use than a hand-held slicer because it has legs for added stability. And don't forget the mandoline's inimitable talent: crinkle and waffle cuts. Here are our favorites among the dozen we tested.

how we tested

We tested 12 widely available mandolines, assessing each for ease of use, construction, performance, and safety. We were looking for sturdy mandolines with stable legs that resist skidding, intuitive assembly, super-sharp blades, and smooth functioning. We sliced potatoes into varying thicknesses, from paper-thin to as thick as the mandoline would allow. We also sliced potatoes using the julienne and crinkle/waffle cut blades. We sliced and julienned carrots, shaved fennel, and sliced tomatoes and onions.



to buy or not to buy?

Do you really need a mandoline? Let's just say it comes in handy when making lots of thin, even slices or julienne cuts for any of these preparations (to name a few):

- Caramelized onions
- Gratins (potato, root vegetable, squash)
- Planks of zucchini, summer squash, or eggplant
- Fruit tarts
- French fries (crinkle, waffle cut, or straight)
- Shaved fennel, radish, apple, or hard cheeses for salads
- Onion rings
- Pickled vegetables
- Cole slaw
- Cucumber salad
- Vegetable stir-fries



THE ULTIMATE

De Buyer La Mandoline V Professionnelle

\$190; Kitchenu.com

Priced at the fantasy level (but maybe you *deserve* it), this one's for the cook who wants a top-of-the-line mandoline. The extremely sharp V-shaped blade slices smoothly and effortlessly, even with ripe tomatoes—the only mandoline we tested that can make that claim. It sits on its side at a comfortable 45-degree angle, has a large food pusher, and the insertion and removal of the slicing blades is intuitive and straightforward. The design of the stainless-steel pusher is a standout—it's spring-loaded to maintain constant, even pressure on the food so you don't have to. And it feels

sturdy and natural as you move it. You can set up the handle for right- or left-hand use. Clear markings at the top of the mandoline help you gauge the thickness of your cut, and the crank that adjusts the thickness is easy to access and operate. This model also comes with lots of bells and whistles: a straight-slicing blade, a blade for crinkle and waffle cuts, and three julienne blades—4 mm ($\frac{3}{16}$ inch), 7 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch), and 10 mm ($\frac{3}{8}$ inch), all easy to install. The V Professionnelle also comes with a demonstration DVD and a large hard-plastic travel case.



ALL-AROUND CHAMP

De Buyer La Mandoline Swing

\$90; Chefscatalog.com

Reasonably priced and user-friendly, this model is a great value for the money. The straight blades are razor-sharp and made for smooth slicing on almost everything except tomatoes and carrots. The spring-loaded pusher is easy to use and roomy enough to hold an average-size potato. This mandoline really excelled at crinkle and waffle cuts, but it doesn't have measured markings, so you have to guess as you adjust for thickness. The Swing comes with a double-sided blade that's straight on one side and serrated on the other (for crinkle and waffle cuts), and a double-sided julienne blade with 4 mm ($\frac{3}{16}$ inch) and 10 mm ($\frac{7}{8}$ inch) widths. It's available in a variety of colors—orange, green, red, and black.

how it works

- A mandoline consists of an angled “runway” with a sharp blade mounted across the middle. The top half of the runway adjusts in height to vary the thickness of your cuts. The bottom half doesn't move.
- Most mandolines feature “pushers” with protective hand guards to hold the food in place as it slides down the runway and across the blade. The sliced food falls underneath.
- For julienne slices, mount an additional blade with teeth in front of the straight blade.
- For crinkle cuts, replace the straight blade with a wavy, serrated blade.
- For waffle or lattice cuts, use the crinkle-cut blade to make the first (very thin) cut, then slide the pusher—with food attached—back up to the top, rotate it a quarter turn, and slide it down the runway again.



BEST BUY

Oxo Good Grips V-Blade Mandoline Slicer

\$40; Oxo.com

This plastic model with a surprisingly sharp V-blade is a solid entry-level mandoline. It can slice in thicknesses from $\frac{1}{16}$ inch to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, create two widths of julienne cuts ($\frac{1}{8}$ inch and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch), make crinkle cuts (but not waffle), and even dice ($\frac{1}{8}$ inch and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch), a feature the other models do not have. The large pusher has an

easy-to-grip shape that keeps your hand comfortably away from the blade. A color-coded dial makes it simple to set the thickness of a cut, but there are only four thickness settings. As a result, the french fries we made with this model were pretty thin. The blades store neatly under the unit.



Watch a video on how to set up and use a mandoline at FineCooking.com/extras.

Maryellen Driscoll is a Fine Cooking contributing editor.



DRINKS

Beer Becomes a Cocktail

Beer makes a great mixed drink—it goes down easy, plays well with others, and is the perfect thirst quencher. **BY LEW BRYSON**

BEER'S PRETTY FINE STUFF, IF YOU ASK ME.

It has that great combination of sweet and bitter, a modest amount of alcohol (so you can drink a lot of it), and bubbles, which are never a bad thing. It's so simple: Open, pour, enjoy.

Then why mess with the easy pleasure of a tall, cool one by adding other ingredients? Because the results can be eye-openingly delicious. Call them beer cocktails, fettlers, *cerveza preparada* (prepared beer), or “just something I whipped up”—they're a great alternative to summer's more expected concoctions.

I started messing around with adding things to beer when I was in college. The cheap draft beer that was all we could afford tasted a lot better with a dose of ginger ale (I didn't know it then, but I was making what was essentially a Shandy).

My beer cocktails have gotten more sophisticated since then, but not a lot. They're intrinsically simple drinks. Because of the carbonation you can't shake them—just stir gently. And you want to keep the ingredient list short so you don't hide the character of the beer.

There are three ways to make a beer cocktail. You can enhance the beer with small amounts of nonalcoholic mixers, like fresh citrus juice, hot sauce, or spices. The Germans add a dollop of raspberry syrup to a piercingly tart Berliner Weisse beer. The simple Chelada, which hails from Mexico, features a light lager with a squeeze of fresh lime, served over ice in a salt-rimmed glass.

For a spicier, more robust version with soy, Worcestershire, and hot pepper sauces, check out the Michelada (recipe opposite).

Another option is to combine two beers that play well together. Guinness stout is a classic base for beer cocktails, as in the Black and Tan, which blends the burnt black bitterness of a stout, usually Guinness, with the smoother maltiness of a pale ale. In the Peach Melba Cocktail (recipe opposite), inspired by the classic dessert, I followed this idea and poured two fruit lambic beers together for a sweet, effervescent apéritif.

You can also boost your beer with the intense flavors and aromas of spirits or other alcoholic beverages, as in the elegant Black Velvet (Guinness mixed fifty-fifty with Champagne). My version, Eve's Black Heart (recipe below), mixes rich, dark Guinness with crisp, dry hard cider and a float of Calvados, or apple brandy. It's a knockout.

With the craft beer revolution in full swing and an exciting array of Belgian and British beers now available here, the options for creating new beer cocktails seem almost infinite. All it takes is imagination, a good beer store, a few adventurous friends, and a long afternoon to experiment. Pick out a few beers in varying styles (light lagers, brown ales, hoppy IPAs, dark stouts), have plenty of glassware on hand, some mixers, and ice, and you've got the ingredients for a new kind of cocktail party that'll have you mixing into the night.

eve's black heart

Similar to a Black Velvet, which is made with Guinness and Champagne, this beer cocktail has a double hit of apples from both hard cider and apple brandy. Hence, the name, derived from Eve's penchant for the forbidden fruit.

Serves 2

- 8 fl. oz. (1 cup) dry hard cider (such as Crispin brut or Farnum Hill semi-dry), chilled
- 1 14.9-fl.-oz. can Guinness draught, chilled
- 1 fl. oz. (2 Tbs.) Calvados

Divide the cider between two chilled pint glasses. To float the Guinness on top of the cider, pop the tab on the can, let it foam up, and then pour the beer slowly over the rounded back of a tablespoon measure held over each glass, stopping when almost full. Gently pour 1 Tbs. of the Calvados on top of each drink. Serve.

Photographs by Scott Phillips; food styling by Michelli Knauer



peach melba cocktail

Fruit lambic beers are tart Belgian brews fermented with wild yeasts and aged with crushed fruit or fruit juices. A mix of peach and raspberry lambics makes a drink that sounds like dessert but tastes like an apéritif.

Serves 1

- 6 fl. oz. (¾ cup) pêche (peach) lambic, such as Lindemans, chilled**
- 2 fl. oz. (¼ cup) framboise (raspberry) lambic, such as Lindemans, chilled**
- 1 thin slice lemon**

Combine the two beers in a chilled 9-oz. Champagne flute. Gently squeeze the lemon slice over the drink and then add the slice to the drink. Serve.

the michelada

This beer cocktail is simple and delicious. For an even simpler version—the Chelada—salt the rim of an ice-filled pint glass, add light lager and fresh lime juice, and enjoy.

Serves 1

- Kosher salt**
- ½ small lime**
- 1 12-fl.-oz. bottle light lager, such as Corona or Modelo Especial, chilled**
- 2 dashes Worcestershire sauce**
- 2 dashes soy sauce**
- 2 dashes hot pepper sauce, such as Cholula or Tabasco**
- Freshly cracked black pepper**

Pour 2 Tbs. salt into a small, wide dish. Wet the rim of a chilled pint glass with the lime. Dip the rim into the salt, margarita-style. Fill the glass with ice and squeeze the lime over the ice. Fill the glass with beer and then add the Worcestershire, soy, and hot sauce. Give a pepper mill a single twist over the ice. Stir gently until the drink takes on a uniform color. Serve immediately, with the remaining beer on the side for adding to the glass as you empty it. By the time you've finished, the heat of the drink will have subsided and you'll be ready for another.

Lew Bryson is a beer and whiskey writer based in Newtown, Pennsylvania.



For a bonus beer cocktail, go to FineCooking.com/extras.





play it by ear

Sweet corn on the cob is hard to resist, but there's a lot you can do with it off the cob, too. Here are five delicious ideas.

BY MARYELLEN DRISCOLL

ON OUR FARM, corn is a watched crop. First by the ravens eager to pluck the new tender sprouts. Then by Mooky, our brawny Lab, keen on scaring off any large-winged bird that hovers over the fields. And finally, we watch. We keep the weeds knocked back until the stalks grow enough canopy to shade them out. We greet the sight of the corn's emerging ears. We watch the tassel—the browning of the cascading silk a telltale mark of ripening.

Then, when we know it's time, we sample the results of all that watching and waiting. Raw. Right there in the field. Corn that fresh pops with a milky sweetness that dribbles down our chins, over our hands, and onto our T-shirts. There's no pot, no grill. No butter or salt. And definitely no table manners.

There's nothing quite like sinking your teeth into that first crop of summer corn. But the sweet, nutty, creamy qualities that make it so delicious are also what make it well suited to a surprising variety of dishes. Relish it on the cob, slathered in butter and stippled with salt. Then, cut it off the cob and try it in a spare and silky soup. Or in a fresh salad with cherry tomatoes and edamame, corn kernels are toasted in a skillet to tease out their nutty essence. Stirred into risotto, a creamy mash of grated corn makes this rich dish all the more luscious. The possibilities are endless, and the rewards for the long corn wait are sweet.



toasted corn, cherry tomato, and edamame salad

Toasting the corn in a skillet brings out its nutty flavor. You could also use grilled corn (see p. 39) in place of the skillet-toasted version.

Serves 4 to 6 as a side dish

- 1 cup frozen shelled edamame**
- 5 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2¼ cups fresh corn kernels (from about 3 medium ears)**
- 2 Tbs. plain low-fat yogurt**
- 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice**
- 1 tsp. clover honey**
- ½ tsp. minced garlic**
- Kosher salt**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 heaping cup quartered cherry tomatoes (about 15)**
- ¼ cup very thinly sliced fresh mint**
- ¼ cup very thinly sliced fresh basil**

Cook the edamame according to package directions. Drain and set aside to cool completely.

Heat 1 Tbs. of the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the corn and cook, stirring occasionally, until the kernels are golden brown in patches, about 9 minutes. Transfer to a bowl to cool.

In a small bowl or liquid measuring cup, whisk the yogurt, lemon juice, honey, garlic, and ¼ tsp. salt. Slowly pour in the remaining 4 Tbs. olive oil, whisking constantly until blended. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

In a medium serving bowl, combine the cooled edamame and corn, the tomatoes, and the herbs. Gently toss. Add half of the vinaigrette and gently toss. Add more vinaigrette and salt and pepper to taste. Serve at room temperature.

Corn: A Buyer's Guide

There are four types of sweet corn: standard sweet, sugar-enhanced, supersweet, and synergistic. You won't see these agricultural terms used at grocery stores or even at farmers' markets, but they help to explain the differences among them in terms of sweetness, tenderness, and how well they store.

Standard sweet

Common varieties include **Butter and Sugar**, with white and yellow kernels, and **Silver Queen**, with white kernels. This type of corn has a traditional corn flavor and texture, although sweetness varies among varieties. Its sugars are quicker to convert to starch, so it doesn't keep long after harvest.



Silver Queen

Sugar-enhanced

Varieties include **Delectable**, **Kandy Korn**, and **Seneca Dancer** are three popular varieties. Known for having a more tender texture than the standard type, sugar-enhanced corn is widely popular. Its degree of sweetness changes with the variety, but the conversion of sugar to starch is slower than that of standard sweet corn, so it holds up better.



Seneca Dancer

Supersweet

Varieties include **Sun & Stars** and **Xtra-Sweet**. The most sugary of all, this type of corn has less true corn flavor and a firmer, almost crunchy texture, because the skin on the kernels is tougher. It holds its sweetness longer than any other type of corn, which is why you'll often see it in supermarkets, where the corn isn't typically freshly picked.



Supersweet

Synergistic

A popular variety is **Serendipity**. This type has both the tenderness of sugar-enhanced corn and the more pronounced sweetness of supersweet. It requires more time to mature than sugar-enhanced corn and can be watery if harvested too soon.



Serendipity

risotto with corn, spicy sausage, and wilted arugula

Grating some of the corn to a mash and blending it with the rice makes a creamy foundation for this corn-studded risotto.

Serves 4 to 6 as a main course

- 6 cups lower-salt chicken broth; more as needed**
- 3 medium ears fresh corn, shucked and halved crosswise**
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 medium cloves garlic, minced**
- 3 packed cups trimmed arugula**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 3 Tbs. unsalted butter**
- 1 medium leek (white and light-green parts only), finely diced (about ¾ cup)**
- ¼ lb. hot Italian pork sausage, casings removed and broken into chunks**
- 2 cups arborio or carnaroli rice**
- ½ cup dry white wine (like Pinot Grigio)**
- ½ cup freshly grated Pecorino Romano; more for serving**
- 2 Tbs. finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley (optional)**

Heat the chicken broth in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat until very hot. Add the corn and cook until the kernels are just tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer the corn to a cutting board and reduce the heat to keep the broth hot but not simmering.

Once the corn is cool enough to handle, slice the kernels off four of the pieces. Grate the kernels from the remaining two pieces using the large holes of a box grater. Discard the cobs.

Heat the olive oil and garlic in a large, heavy saucepan or medium Dutch oven over medium-high heat until the garlic is fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the arugula and toss with tongs until wilted, about 1 minute. Season with a generous pinch of salt and pepper. Transfer the arugula to a cutting board, let it cool slightly, and then coarsely chop it. Wipe the pan clean.

Melt the butter in the cleaned pan over medium heat. Add the leek and a generous pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 2 minutes. Add the sausage, breaking it apart with a fork or spoon into crumbles, and cook until no longer pink, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the rice and stir until the grains are well coated with fat and the edges become translucent, 1 to 2 minutes. Pour in the wine and stir until it's absorbed, about 30 seconds. Stir in the grated corn.

Ladle enough of the hot broth into the pan to barely cover the rice, about 1½ cups. Bring to a boil and then adjust the heat to maintain a lively simmer. Cook, stirring frequently, until the broth is mostly absorbed, 2 to 3 minutes. Continue adding broth in ½-cup increments, stirring occasionally and letting each addition be absorbed before adding the next.

After about 20 minutes, the rice should be just cooked but still fairly firm. At this point, add the whole corn kernels, chopped arugula, and another ½ cup broth. Continue to simmer and stir until the corn is warmed through and the rice is just tender to the tooth, an additional 1 to 3 minutes. Stir in another splash of broth if the risotto seems too thick. Remove the pot from the heat and stir in the cheese. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve the risotto immediately with a sprinkling of cheese and parsley, if using.





fresh corn fritters with charred tomato salsa

Try these as an appetizer (served with the salsa here), as a side with grilled chicken or fish, or for breakfast with maple syrup.

Yields about 26 bite-size fritters

- 4½ oz. (1 cup) all-purpose flour**
- ¼ cup stone-ground yellow cornmeal**
- 2 tsp. baking powder**
- 1 tsp. sugar**
- ½ tsp. table salt; more for sprinkling**
- ½ cup whole milk**
- ¼ cup sour cream**
- 2 large eggs**
- 1 cup fresh corn kernels (from about 1 large or 2 small ears of corn), coarsely chopped**

1-1½ cups vegetable oil

1 recipe Charred Tomato Salsa (opposite)

In a medium bowl, stir the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, sugar, and salt. In a small bowl, whisk the milk, sour cream, and eggs. With a rubber spatula, gently stir the egg mixture into the flour mixture until just blended. Stir in the corn. Let sit for 10 to 15 minutes. Meanwhile, position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 200°F.

Pour the oil into a small, heavy frying pan, preferably cast iron, to a depth of ½ inch. Heat over medium heat until it's hot enough that a small dollop of batter sizzles when added. With a spring-lever miniature ice cream scoop or a tablespoon, scoop up a ball

of the batter and gently release it into the hot oil. Add three or four more balls of batter to the hot oil, taking care not to crowd the pan. Reduce the heat to medium low so that the fritters cook gently. When golden brown on the bottom and barely cooked around the top edge, after 1 to 2 minutes, use a slotted spatula to turn the fritters and cook until golden on the bottom, 1 to 2 minutes longer.

Transfer the fritters to a wire rack set over a baking sheet, sprinkle generously with salt, and keep warm in the oven. Continue to cook the remaining batter in small batches, adding more oil as needed to maintain the ½-inch depth. Serve right away with the salsa.



CHARRED TOMATO SALSA

This salsa is great on grilled steak or chicken tacos, too. It'll keep in the fridge for up to 1 week.

Yields about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

- 1 lb. fresh ripe tomatoes (about 3 medium)**
- 1 unpeeled medium clove garlic**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ medium chipotle from a can of chipotle chiles in adobo sauce**
- Kosher salt**
- 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 Tbs. finely chopped fresh cilantro**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. fresh lime juice**

Position an oven rack about 4 inches below the broiler and heat the broiler on high. Arrange the tomatoes and garlic on a rimmed baking sheet and broil until the tomatoes are charred on one side, about 5 minutes. Turn the tomatoes and garlic and char on the second side, about 2 minutes longer. Let cool. Peel the tomatoes and garlic, discarding the skins and saving any juices that are released.

In a blender, briefly purée the tomatoes and their juices, the garlic, chipotle chile, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt—it needn't be perfectly smooth.

In a medium, heavy-based saucepan, heat the oil over medium-high heat. When a drop of the puréed tomato mixture sizzles when added, pour in the remaining purée. Bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Adjust the heat to an active simmer and continue to cook, stirring frequently, until reduced to a scant cup and thickened to a sauce consistency, 8 to 12 minutes. Cool to room temperature. Stir in the cilantro and the lime juice. Season to taste with salt. Serve at room temperature.



How to Grill Corn on the Cob

Grilling is a great alternative to boiling corn on the cob, because it gives the corn a toasty flavor. With this method, the single layer of husk that's left on the corn protects it from charring all over, which can overpower the sweetness of the corn and dry it out.

Prepare a medium to medium-high charcoal or gas grill fire (about 400°F). Meanwhile, remove all but the innermost layer of the corn husks. Gently bend back this remaining layer of husk without detaching it so that you can remove the silk. (Don't worry about getting all the silk off—the rest will cook off or soften on the grill.) Pull the husks back into place so that the corn is loosely covered.

Put the corn on the grill and cover. Turn when the husk is nicely browned on one side, after 2 to 3 minutes. Continue to cook and turn until the corn husk is toasted on all sides, 5 to 6 minutes total. Serve immediately.



summer corn soup with crisp prosciutto

Yields about 8 cups; serves 4 as a main course or 8 as a starter

- 3 very thin slices prosciutto
- 3-4 large ears fresh corn
- 4 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped (about 1½ cups)
- Kosher salt
- 2 cups lower-salt chicken broth
- 1½ cups medium-diced peeled red potato (from 2 to 3 medium)
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh basil

Position an oven rack about 4 inches below the broiler and heat the broiler on high. Arrange the prosciutto in a single layer on a small baking sheet and broil until it begins to curl, 1 to 2 minutes. Flip the prosciutto and broil until it appears dry-crisp and has curled a bit more, about 1 minute. Let cool, then finely chop or crumble by hand; set aside.

Slice the kernels off the corn cobs for a total of 3 cups corn. Reserve the cobs.

In a medium Dutch oven over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the onion and cook until softened and slightly golden, 5 to 7 minutes. Season with a generous pinch of salt.

Add 4 cups of water, the broth, potatoes, 1½ cups of the corn, the cobs, and 2 tsp. salt. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer until the potatoes are tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from the heat and discard the cobs.

Working in batches, carefully purée the soup in a blender, transferring each batch to a large heatproof bowl or large liquid measuring cup.

Pour the puréed soup back into the pot. Add the remaining 1½ cups corn and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the corn kernels are tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Garnish each serving with the crisped prosciutto and basil.

sweet corn cake with blueberry-lavender compote

A lavender-scented topping lends an elegant touch to this rustic cake. To cook the corn, boil it in lightly salted water until tender—3 to 5 minutes, depending on how fresh the corn is. You can skip sifting the cornmeal if you'd like a coarser texture in the cake.

Serves 10 to 12

FOR THE CAKE

- 6 oz. (12 Tbs.) unsalted butter, softened; more for the pan
- 4½ oz. (1 cup) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. table salt
- 2¼ oz. (½ cup) sifted stone-ground yellow cornmeal
- 1 cup cooked fresh corn kernels (from about 1 large ear)
- ½ cup sour cream, at room temperature
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs, at room temperature and lightly beaten

FOR THE COMPOTE

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tsp. dried lavender
- 1¼ cups cooked fresh corn kernels (from about 2 medium ears)
- 1 cup fresh blueberries

MAKE THE CAKE

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Butter the sides and bottom of a 9x2-inch round cake pan. Fit a circle of parchment in the bottom of the pan and butter that as well.

Fresh Picked

When you're buying sweet corn, don't get hung up on varieties. Instead, keep in mind that timing is everything. Corn's sugars quickly turn into starch as the corn ages, so freshness should be your priority.

Buy To start, find a reliable source for locally grown produce—one that's closely linked to the fields where the vegetables are grown. Ideally, this means buying straight from the farm, either at a farmstand or a nearby farmers' market. Don't husk the corn before buying it. Instead, look for ears snugly wrapped in green husks that look vibrant, not dried out. Run your fingers along the ear. You should be able to feel plump, densely packed kernels up to or close to the tip.

Store At home, use fresh corn as soon as possible. If you must store it, don't remove the husk, which protects the corn from moisture loss. Wrap the ears in damp paper towels, seal them in zip-top bags, and store in the fridge for no longer than two days.



Sift the flour, baking powder, and salt into a medium bowl. Whisk in the cornmeal; set aside.

Purée the corn kernels in a food processor until smooth. Strain the purée through a fine sieve, pressing with a rubber spatula to extract the liquid; scrape any purée off the bottom of the sieve into the liquid and then discard the remaining solids. Measure $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the strained corn liquid and transfer to a small bowl (discard any excess liquid). Stir in the sour cream.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and sugar on medium-high speed until fluffy, about 2 minutes. Stop and scrape the sides of the bowl. On low speed, slowly pour in the beaten eggs, mixing until incorporated and stopping midway to scrape down the sides. (The mixture will be loose and curdled-looking.)

On low speed, add one-third of the flour mixture and mix until just blended. Add one-third of the sour cream-corn mixture and mix until just blended. Alternate adding the remaining flour and sour cream mixtures in two additions each. Do not overmix.

Scrape the batter into the cake pan and spread it evenly with a spatula. Bake until the cake is golden brown and springs back when lightly pressed in the center, 30 to 35 minutes. Transfer to a rack to cool for 10 to 15 minutes. Run a knife around the edge of the pan and then gently invert the cake onto the rack, removing the pan. Remove the parchment, turn the cake right side up onto the rack, and let cool completely.

MAKE THE COMPOTE

Combine the sugar and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water in a small saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring frequently until the sugar has dissolved completely. Remove from the heat. Add the lavender and stir to combine. Let infuse for 10 minutes, then strain the syrup into a small bowl and let cool.

When ready to serve the cake, stir the corn and blueberries into the syrup. Cut the cake into wedges, and top each serving with about 3 Tbs. of the mixture, letting most of the syrup drain off the spoon before sprinkling the blueberries and corn over the cake.

Maryellen Driscoll is a Fine Cooking contributing editor. She and her husband own Free Bird Farm, in upstate New York. ■



Get information on hundreds of ingredients at FineCooking.com/ingredients.





grilling shellfish

Lobster, shrimp, even oysters—they all take well to the grill, with sweet and smoky results. We show you how, and throw in three great go-with sauces along the way. BY ELIZABETH KARMEL

THERE ARE SO MANY GOOD REASONS to grill shellfish. Whether it's shrimp, lobster, clams, mussels, or oysters, grilling shellfish is as simple as can be—in most cases, a brush of olive oil and a sprinkle of salt are all you need in the way of prep—and it's a great way to serve a crowd. But the best reason is flavor. Nothing quite matches the sweet, intense, and slightly charred taste of shellfish when it's cooked on the grill.

The process is inherently easy, but there is something of an art to grilling shellfish. First, leave it in the shell, which protects the delicate meat and keeps it moist during cooking. Then grill it over relatively high, direct heat and cover the grill to keep the heat in; otherwise, the cooking time will be too long and the shellfish will get tough. Finally, pair it with a sauce of your choice (there are three tasty ones to choose from here) and you've got the makings of a perfect summer cookout.



grilled lobster

See Test Kitchen, p. 81, for directions on how to pick the meat from a cooked lobster.

Serves 4

- 4 whole live lobsters (1½ to 2 lb. each) or 4 frozen lobster tails, thawed**
- Olive oil, as needed**

Prepare the live lobsters as directed in Test Kitchen, p. 81.

Prepare a medium-high gas or charcoal grill fire. Brush olive oil on both sides of the lobsters and set them bottom side down on the cooking grates. Grill until the shells are bright red and the protein in the juices that seep from the shells turns white and coagulates, 8 to 10 minutes for a 1½-lb. lobster and 12 to 14 minutes for a 2-lb. lobster. (There's no need to turn the lobster over.) A thawed lobster tail will take about 8 minutes to grill.

Remove the lobsters from the grill and let cool for a few minutes. Serve warm with the dipping sauce of your choice (see pp. 48–49).

Note: With this method, you'll end up with a slight curve in the lobster's tail. If you want to keep the tail straight, thread a metal or bamboo skewer through the tail before grilling.

grilled shrimp

For tips on deveining shell-on shrimp, see Test Kitchen, p. 81.

Serves 4

- 1 lb. jumbo shell-on shrimp (16 to 20 per lb.), preferably deveined**
- 2 Tbs. olive oil**
- Kosher salt**

Rinse the shrimp under cold running water. Dry the shrimp with paper towels and toss them in the oil to coat. Season with 1½ tsp. salt.

Prepare a medium-high gas or charcoal grill fire. When the grill is ready, use long-handled tongs to put the shrimp on the cooking grates, arranging them across the grates so they don't fall through. Grill, turning halfway through cooking, until the shrimp curl and become pink, 2 or 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a platter. Serve immediately with the dipping sauce of your choice (see pp. 48–49), or chill to use in a seafood salad or a cold shrimp cocktail.





mussels, clams, and oysters

This recipe serves four, but it's easily doubled or tripled. Plan on 6 shellfish per person, but buy more than that, since 2 or 3 out of every dozen may not open and will need to be discarded.

Serves 4

30 fresh mussels, clams, or oysters in the shell

Scrub the shellfish with a stiff brush under cool running water. If the mussels have beards, pull them off. Pat dry.

Prepare a medium-high gas or charcoal fire. When the grill is ready, set the shellfish directly on the cooking grate (oysters cupped side down). Grill until

the shells pop open, the meat is plump, and the juices are boiling and sizzling in the shell, 3 to 7 minutes for mussels, 6 to 10 minutes for clams, and 4 to 6 minutes for oysters; there's no need to turn the shellfish. (Cooking times can vary widely, because the larger the shellfish, the longer it will take to cook; on the other hand, the fresher it is, the shorter the cooking time.) Remove the shellfish as they finish cooking, protecting your hands with tongs or hot pads. Discard any that don't open. Serve on the half shell with the dipping sauce of your choice (see pp. 48–49).

Oysters "R" Good All Year

There's an old wives' tale that oysters shouldn't be eaten in the hot summer months (any month that doesn't have the letter "r" in its name). Not true! Decades ago, when refrigeration was still primitive, the concern was probably valid. But with modern refrigeration, cooked oysters are perfectly safe in summer and, most would argue, raw oysters are, too, as long as they've been properly refrigerated.



shellfish on the grill: a buyer's guide

When you're shopping for shellfish, freshness is key. Always buy shellfish on the day you plan to use it and refrigerate it as soon as you can. Not only will fresher shellfish taste better, but it will also cook faster. Here's what to look for when buying shellfish, how to store it properly, and how long to grill it.

SHELLFISH	WHAT TO BUY	HOW TO STORE	GRILLING TIME (medium-high heat)
Shrimp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unless you live close to where they are fished, the freshest shrimp are frozen. That's because they're usually flash frozen within hours of being caught. Most nonfrozen shrimp sold in stores have been previously frozen and are less fresh. Choose IQF (Individually Quick Frozen) shrimp in the shell. Look for jumbo 16 to 20 count shrimp, which means that there are 16 to 20 shrimp in a pound (in general, the lower the number of shrimp per pound, the larger the shrimp). 	Keep shrimp frozen until ready to use; thaw under cold running water. Store thawed shrimp in the refrigerator in a loosely closed plastic bag on a bed of ice in a large bowl or dish with sides. Refresh ice as it melts, and use within a day.	2 to 3 minutes per side
Lobster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase whole live lobsters and kill them just before grilling (for directions, see Test Kitchen, page 81). One 1½- to 2-lb. lobster per person is usually enough. But if you are buying "chicken" lobsters, which weigh under a pound a piece, count on two lobsters per person. 	Store live lobsters in the refrigerator in a damp paper bag on wet newspapers or paper towels in a large pan or platter with sides. Use within a day.	Small (about 1½ lb.), 8 to 10 minutes Large (about 2 lb.), 12 to 14 minutes
Lobster tail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An IQF (Individually Quick Frozen) lobster tail is a good alternative to a whole lobster. Not only is it easier to handle, but it's also less expensive. 	Keep frozen until ready to use. Thaw under cold running water just before cooking.	8 minutes
Mussels, Clams, Oysters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When buying mussels, clams, and oysters, make sure their shells are closed or that they close immediately with a gentle tap. That's an indication they're still alive. Discard any whose shells open prior to cooking. Buy more than the quantity required, since you'll likely have to discard a few that don't open during cooking. 	Store in an open plastic bag in the refrigerator on a bed of ice in a large bowl or dish with sides. Refresh ice as it melts, and use within a day.	Mussels, 3 to 7 minutes Clams, 6 to 10 minutes Oysters, 4 to 6 minutes

bloody mary cocktail sauce

This tart and tangy sauce is a twist on a classic Bloody Mary cocktail. Rim your serving dish with celery salt before serving, if you like.

Yields a scant 2¼ cups

- 2 small lemons
- 1 small lime
- 1 cup ketchup
- 1 cup Heinz chili sauce
- 2 heaping Tbs. prepared white horseradish; more to taste
- 2 Tbs. vodka
- 1 Tbs. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tsp. puréed canned chipotle chile in adobo; more to taste
- ¼ tsp. celery salt; more to taste

Finely grate the zest from the lemons and then juice them. Juice the lime. In a nonreactive bowl, mix 3 Tbs. of the lemon juice, 2 Tbs. of the lime juice, and all of the zest with the ketchup, chili sauce, horseradish, vodka, Worcestershire, chipotle, and celery salt until well combined.

The sauce can be refrigerated for up to a week. Add more horseradish, chipotle, lemon juice, or celery salt to taste before serving.

Note: Chipotles come canned in adobo sauce. The easiest way to use them is to purée the whole can and store the mixture in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks or in the freezer for up to 3 months. Use a small amount to add a sweet, smoky heat to everything from this cocktail sauce to mayonnaise, soups, and stews.

These three delicious dipping sauces work well with any grilled shellfish. Pick your favorite or make them all.

old bay dipping sauce

The flavors of a classic shrimp boil are combined in one dynamite melted-butter dipping sauce.

Yields about 1 cup

- 8 oz. (1 cup) unsalted butter, cut into 16 pieces
- 1 Tbs. Old Bay Seasoning
- 1 Tbs. grated shallot (about 1 large shallot)

In a small saucepan, bring 3 Tbs. water to a simmer over medium heat. Reduce the heat to low. One piece at a time, whisk in the butter, waiting until each piece is completely incorporated before

adding the next. Once the consistency begins to change from watery to creamy, with a pale yellow hue (after 4 or 5 pieces of butter have been whisked in), emulsification has begun. At this point, you can add 2 or 3 pieces of butter at a time, making sure they are almost fully combined before adding more.

Whisk in the Old Bay and shallot. Turn off the heat but leave the pan on the burner to let the flavors develop. Serve warm. This sauce can be made up to 2 hours ahead and kept in a warm spot.

orange-saffron aioli

This sauce is tailor-made for grilled mussels, but it's good with other shellfish, too. Omit the olives if you want a more delicate flavor.

Yields about 1 cup

- 1 large orange**
Pinch saffron, threads crumbled
- 2 large cloves garlic, roughly chopped or grated**
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard**
- 1 large egg yolk**
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- ½ cup vegetable oil; more as needed**
- Kosher salt**
- ¼ cup pitted and finely chopped Niçoise olives**

Finely grate the zest from half the orange and then juice the orange. Put 1½ Tbs. of the juice in a small bowl along with the saffron, and let sit for 10 minutes.

In a food processor, combine the saffron mixture, orange zest, garlic, and mustard and pulse until the garlic is puréed, about 15 seconds. Add the egg yolk and process for 10 seconds. With the machine running, slowly pour the olive oil and vegetable oil through the feed tube until the sauce is thick and well combined. (If you like a thicker texture, add a little more vegetable oil.) Season to taste with salt.

Refrigerate the aioli for at least 2 hours to let the flavors marry. (The aioli will keep for 1 week in the refrigerator.) Fold in the olives just before serving.

Note: This recipe contains a raw egg yolk; if that's a concern, use a pasteurized egg instead.

Elizabeth Karmel is the author of Soaked, Slathered, and Seasoned: A Complete Guide to Flavoring Food for the Grill. ■



Watch a video on preparing lobsters for the grill at [FineCooking.com/extras](https://www.finecooking.com/extras).



A top-down view of several popsicles scattered on a light grey, textured surface. The popsicles come in various colors and flavors: orange, white, dark chocolate, and light yellow. Some are whole, while others are partially eaten or broken. The sticks are wooden and light-colored.

Cold Comfort

Take a childhood favorite (remember Popsicles?), add vodka (or bourbon or sparkling wine), and freeze. The result? The coolest new cocktail party of the summer.

BY GENEVIEVE KO



bellini pops

The combination of ripe summer peaches and Prosecco makes for a sweet frozen treat that tastes a lot like the popular cocktail.

Yields 10 pops

16 to 18 oz. ripe peaches (about 4 medium), peeled, pitted, and chopped

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar

$2\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. fresh lemon juice

$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups Prosecco

Stir the peaches, sugar, and lemon juice in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce the heat to medium, and simmer, stirring frequently, until the mixture is thick and syrupy, 10 to 15 minutes. Most of the peaches will have broken down, with some softened chunks remaining.

Transfer the mixture to a blender and blend until smooth. Add the Prosecco and blend briefly to incorporate it. Let the mixture cool to room temperature and then refrigerate until cold.

Divide the mixture among ten 3-oz. pop molds or wax-lined paper cups and freeze until just barely set, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Insert craft sticks and freeze until firm, at least 6 hours more. When ready to serve, unmold or peel off the paper cups. The pops can be frozen for up to 3 days.

bittersweet chocolate-bourbon pops

Dark chocolate and bourbon make for a truly decadent treat.
Yields 8 pops

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar
- $3\frac{1}{2}$ oz. bittersweet chocolate (70% to 72%), chopped
- 2 Tbs. Dutch-processed cocoa powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. table salt
- 2 Tbs. good-quality bourbon (like Knob Creek)

Put the sugar, chocolate, cocoa powder, salt, and 2 cups water in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, whisking constantly. Transfer to a 4-cup glass measure (or any container with a spout for easy pouring). Let cool at room temperature for 30 minutes.

Stir in the bourbon and divide the mixture among eight 3-oz. pop molds or wax-lined paper cups. Freeze until just set, about 3 hours. Insert craft sticks and freeze until completely set, about 4 hours more. When ready to serve, unmold or peel off the paper cups. The pops can be frozen for up to 3 days.

Play It Cool

TIPS TO CHILLY SUCCESS

Shape Almost any mold—from classic cylinders to whimsical rockets—will work. Or keep it simple and use small wax-lined paper cups, which peel off easily.

Freeze To ensure that the pops freeze firmly, make certain your freezer is set to 0°F.

Serve You can pile a colorful selection of ice pops on a platter and pass it, or serve them individually in glasses (which do a good job of catching drips).

lemon-vodka cream pops

A splash of citron vodka gives the classic cream pop a decidedly adult kick.

Yields 8 pops

- 3 or 4 medium lemons
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup whole milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. table salt
- 2 Tbs. citron vodka

Using a vegetable peeler, remove all of the zest from 3 of the lemons in 3- to 4-inch-long strips. Set the lemons aside.

Combine the lemon zest, cream, milk, sugar, and salt in a large saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally to dissolve the sugar, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat. Let steep at room temperature, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes.

Squeeze $\frac{3}{4}$ cup juice from the reserved lemons (juice the fourth lemon, if necessary). Stirring constantly, pour the lemon juice into the cream mixture in a slow stream. Stir in the vodka.

Strain the mixture through a fine sieve into a 4-cup glass measure (or any container with a spout for easy pouring), pressing on the solids to extract as much liquid as possible. Divide the mixture among eight 3-oz. pop molds or wax-lined paper cups. Freeze until just barely set, 5 to 6 hours. Insert craft sticks and freeze until completely set, about 2 hours more. When ready to serve, unmold or peel off the paper cups. The pops can be frozen for up to 3 days.

Genevieve Ko is the co-author, with Pichet Ong, of The Sweet Spot: Asian-Inspired Desserts. ■



FRESH TOMATO
SAUCE



GREEK-SPICED
LAMB MEATBALLS
IN TOMATO SAUCE

CURRIED CHICKPEA
AND SUMMER
VEGETABLE STEW



GRILLED MUSHROOM
PIZZAS WITH
FRESH TOMATOES
AND ARUGULA



Get Saucy!

Turn those ripe-right-now tomatoes into a big pot of sauce; then make the most of it in three unexpected recipes.

BY DOMENICA MARCHETTI

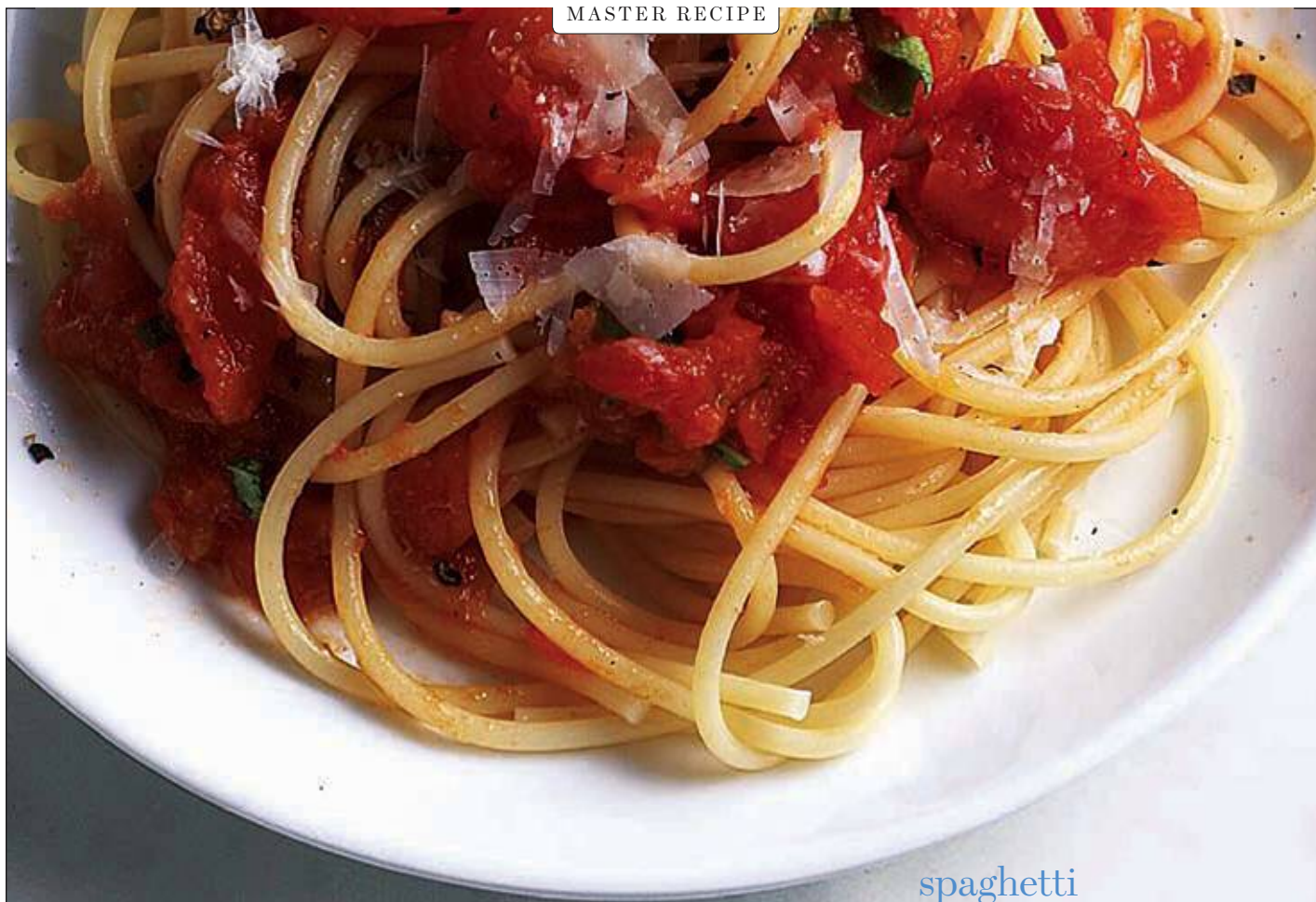
I LOOK FORWARD to summer tomatoes the way some children feverishly anticipate Christmas morning, counting down the weeks until they appear at my farmers' market.

But just like a child surrounded with too many gifts, I admit to feeling a little overwhelmed by the bounty when tomato season is in full swing. I try my best to do right by them, serving tomatoes in salads, sandwiches, and savory tarts. But when all those red beauties start to overtake the counter, I pull out my biggest saucepan and get to work on a big batch of fresh tomato sauce.

The best tomatoes for sauce are Romas (also known as plum tomatoes), because they're meaty and have less water than other varieties. Once peeled and seeded, they cook into a richly flavored sauce in about an hour.

That big pot of sauce means some great weeknight meals. After I use some to top pasta for dinner the first night, it becomes the foundation for deeply flavored dishes like a curried stew loaded with summer vegetables, Greek-spiced lamb meatballs, and grilled pizzas topped with even more fresh tomatoes.

And because this sauce freezes so well, you can enjoy the essence of summer's flavors long after the last tomato plant has withered—insurance of the seasonal kind.



fresh tomato sauce

Yields about 8 cups sauce; serves 4, with leftovers

- 8 lb. ripe Roma tomatoes (about 40)**
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 3 medium cloves garlic, crushed**
- 2 tsp. kosher salt**

Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil. Rinse the tomatoes in cold water. With a paring knife, cut an X into the bottom of each tomato. (This will make it easier to peel the tomatoes once they're blanched.) Carefully lower about 10 tomatoes into the boiling water and leave them for 20 to 30 seconds. Use a slotted spoon to move them to a large bowl filled with ice water. Continue blanching the tomatoes in batches and transferring them to the ice water.

Use a paring knife and your fingers to remove the skin from the tomatoes—it should peel off easily. Cut the tomatoes lengthwise into quarters, core, and remove the seeds. Coarsely chop the tomatoes and transfer them to a bowl.

Heat the oil and the garlic in a 5- to 6-quart heavy-duty pot over medium-low heat until the garlic begins to sizzle and very lightly browns, 3 to 4 minutes. Carefully pour in the tomatoes. Raise the heat to medium high and bring the tomatoes to a boil. Stir in the salt, reduce the heat to medium, and let the sauce simmer, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes have broken down and the sauce has thickened, about 1 hour. Remove from the heat and discard the garlic.

spaghetti with summer tomato sauce

Serve the sauce over pasta the first night and still have plenty left for the recipes on the following pages.

Serves 4

- 1 lb. dried spaghetti, or other pasta shape**
- Kosher salt**
- 2½ cups Fresh Tomato Sauce (recipe at left)**
- 2 Tbs. chopped fresh basil leaves**
- Freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, for serving**

Cook the pasta in boiling salted water according to package directions; drain. In a small saucepan, heat the tomato sauce over medium-low heat until just simmering. Off the heat, stir in the basil and salt to taste. Toss the pasta with the sauce and sprinkle with the Parmigiano.

greek-spiced lamb meatballs in tomato sauce

Spice up the tomato sauce and you have a rich gravy in which to simmer fragrant lamb meatballs. Garnish with tangy feta and serve with a Greek salad and rice or pitas.

Yields 16 meatballs; serves 4

FOR THE MEATBALLS

Nonstick cooking spray

- 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs, preferably sourdough
- ¼ cup low-fat milk
- ¾ lb. ground lamb, preferably shoulder meat
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 2 Tbs. minced red onion
- 1 Tbs. minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tsp. minced fresh oregano
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- ½ tsp. dried mint
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. sweet paprika, preferably Hungarian
- ¼ tsp. ground allspice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE SAUCE

- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup finely chopped red onion
- 2 tsp. finely chopped fresh oregano
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- 1 3-inch cinnamon stick
- ½ tsp. ground allspice
- ½ cup dry red wine
- 2 cups Fresh Tomato Sauce (recipe opposite)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 oz. feta (preferably Greek), crumbled (scant 1 cup)

MAKE THE MEATBALLS

Heat the oven to 400°F and lightly coat a rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray. In a small bowl, combine the breadcrumbs and milk; let sit until the bread absorbs the milk, about 10 minutes.

Put the lamb in a medium bowl. Squeeze the excess milk out of the breadcrumbs and add them to the lamb. Add the egg, onion, parsley, oregano, garlic, mint, cinnamon, paprika, allspice, ½ tsp. salt, and a few grinds of pepper. With your hands or a rubber spatula, gently work the mixture together until thoroughly combined. Moisten your hands with cold

water and shape the mixture into 16 balls (about the size of golf balls); arrange them on the baking sheet.

Bake the meatballs until cooked through and browned on top, 20 to 25 minutes.

MAKE THE SAUCE

Heat the oil in a large heavy-based saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring frequently, until softened, about 8 minutes. Stir in the oregano, bay leaf, cinnamon stick, and allspice. Raise the heat to medium high and add the wine. Simmer for a minute or two until slightly reduced and then add the tomato sauce and ½ cup water. Bring the sauce to a boil and reduce the heat to medium low. Let the sauce cook at a gentle simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes. Add more water if it seems too thick.

Add the baked meatballs to the sauce, turning to coat them. Cover the pan partially and cook until the meatballs are heated through, about 5 minutes. Discard the bay leaf and cinnamon stick and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve the meatballs and sauce sprinkled with the feta.



curried chickpea and summer vegetable stew

Transform the tomato sauce into an Indian-style vegetable stew that takes advantage of the season's bounty. Serve over basmati rice. You can also top it with the grilled chicken thighs on p. 89.

Serves 4 to 6

- 2 Tbs. peanut or vegetable oil
- 2 cups diced yellow onion
- 2 Tbs. minced fresh ginger
- 1 Tbs. minced garlic
- 1 medium eggplant, cut into ½-inch cubes (4 cups)
- 1 medium yellow summer squash, cut into ½-inch cubes (1¼ cups)
- 1 medium zucchini, cut into ½-inch cubes (1¼ cups)
- Kosher salt
- 1 tsp. garam masala
- ½ tsp. ground coriander
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. ground turmeric
- 1 small red hot chile, minced
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 15-oz. can chickpeas, with liquid
- 1½ cups Fresh Tomato Sauce (recipe on p. 56)
- 1 cup light coconut milk
- ¼ cup plus 2 Tbs. chopped fresh cilantro
- ¼ cup unsweetened shredded coconut, lightly toasted (optional)

Heat the oil in a large, deep skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add the onion and cook, stirring frequently until soft and golden, about 15 minutes (reduce the heat to medium low, if necessary, to prevent the onion from burning). Stir in the ginger and garlic and cook for 2 minutes. Add the eggplant, yellow squash, zucchini, and ½ tsp. salt; stir to coat thoroughly. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are barely tender, 7 to 10 minutes.

Stir in the garam masala, coriander, cumin, turmeric, chile, 1 tsp. salt, and a few grinds of pepper. Cook until the spices are fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Pour in the chickpeas and their liquid, the tomato sauce, coconut milk, and 2 Tbs. of the cilantro.

Raise the heat to medium high and bring the stew to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer, uncovered, until the eggplant and zucchini are completely tender but still hold their shape, and the sauce has thickened, 15 to 20 minutes.

To serve, ladle the stew into shallow rimmed bowls and sprinkle with the remaining ¼ cup cilantro and the toasted coconut (if using).

Fast Food

An easy dinner is guaranteed when you have a container's worth of this simple tomato sauce on hand. Here's how to keep it tasting great:

- Let cool and then transfer to an airtight container.
- Keep in the refrigerator for up to three days.
- Stash in the freezer for up to three months.







grilled mushroom, onion, and fontina pizzas with fresh tomatoes and arugula

To make the pizzas even faster, use refrigerated store-bought pizza dough. Before shaping, allow the dough to sit at room temperature until pliable, about 45 minutes.

Serves 4

1 recipe Pizza Dough (at right)

1½ cups Fresh Tomato Sauce (recipe on p. 56)

2 tsp. chopped fresh basil

4 large portobello mushroom caps, gills and stems removed

3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more for drizzling

Kosher or sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 large red onion, sliced into ½-inch-thick disks

3 cups grated Fontina Val d'Aosta (9½ oz.)

2 medium yellow, purple, or orange tomatoes, sliced ¼ inch thick

2 cups baby arugula

½ cup loosely packed small fresh basil leaves

Balsamic vinegar, for drizzling

Prepare a hot charcoal or gas grill fire. If using charcoal, spread the hot coals across half of the charcoal grate and leave the other half clear. If using gas, turn one of the burners to low to create a cooler zone. Scrub the grill grate with a wire brush and then wipe the grate with a paper towel dipped in oil.

While the grill is heating, shape the pizza dough. Put the dough on a lightly floured work surface. Knead it briefly to expel any air bubbles and then cut it into quarters. Cover 3 pieces with plastic wrap to prevent them from drying out. Using a rolling pin or your hands, flatten the dough into a 10-inch circle about ¼ inch thick. If at any point the dough resists rolling, set it aside to rest for a few minutes while you work another piece of dough.

Lightly dust a baking sheet with a little semolina or flour. Using your fingers, transfer the rolled-out dough to the baking sheet and cover with parchment. Repeat with the remaining 3 pieces of dough, shingling the dough between lightly dusted sheets of parchment. Cover the baking sheet with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to grill the pizzas.

Bring the tomato sauce to a simmer in a small pot over medium heat. Remove it from the heat and stir in the chopped basil. Keep warm.

When the grill is hot, brush the mushroom caps with 2 Tbs. of the olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Slide toothpicks or skewers horizontally into the onion disks to hold them together. Brush the disks with the remaining 1 Tbs. olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Arrange the mushrooms and onions on the hot side of the grill and cook until grill marks have formed, about 4 minutes. Flip and grill until they are well marked and tender, 3 to 4 minutes more for mushrooms,

1 minute more for onions (if the onions threaten to char, move them to the cool side of the grill). Let cool briefly, remove the skewers from the onions, and then coarsely chop the mushrooms and onions.

Have the pizza dough, sauce, toppings, and a clean baking sheet ready near the grill. Use your fingers to carefully transfer one of the dough rounds onto the grate over the hot part of the grill. Grill just until grill marks form on the bottom and the dough has begun to crisp and puff up a bit, about 2 minutes. (If you are able to fit 2 pizzas on the hot part of the grill at the same time, grill 2 at a time.) Using tongs and a wide spatula, move the crust, cooked side up, to the empty baking sheet. Spoon a thin layer of heated tomato sauce over the surface of the pizza. Scatter ¾ cup Fontina over the sauce, and then top with one-quarter of the mushrooms and onions.

Using tongs and a wide spatula, slide the pizza, raw side down, onto the cooler side of the grill. Cover and grill until the bottom is browned and crisped and the cheese has melted, 3 to 5 minutes. Using the tongs and spatula, transfer the pizza to a large dinner plate. Top with about 4 tomato slices and lightly season them with salt. Scatter about one-quarter of the arugula and basil over the pizza and drizzle with a little olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

Grill the remaining 3 pizzas in the same way, dividing the toppings evenly among them. Serve as soon as all of the pizzas have been grilled. (If you want the cooked pizzas to remain hot, put them in a 200°F oven as you finish them, but wait until just before serving to top with the tomatoes, arugula, and basil.)

PIZZA DOUGH

Yields about 1½ lb. dough

12½ oz. (2¾ cups) bread flour; more as needed

1¼ oz. (¼ cup) semolina flour; more for dusting

2 tsp. rapid-rise (instant) yeast

1½ tsp. fine sea salt

3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more for the bowl

Combine the bread flour, semolina, yeast, and sea salt in a food processor fitted with the metal blade. Pour 1 cup of cool water through the feed tube, pulsing as you pour. With the motor running, pour the oil through the feed tube and process until the dough comes together, about 1 minute.

Turn the dough out onto a clean work surface—you may or may not need to flour the surface, depending on how tacky the dough is. Knead the dough until it's smooth and elastic, about 2 minutes, and then gather it into a ball. Grease a large bowl with olive oil and put the dough in the bowl, turning to coat it with oil. Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap and leave in a warm place until the dough has doubled in size, 1½ to 2 hours.

Domenica Marchetti is a cooking teacher and cookbook author. Her most recent book is Big Night In: More Than 100 Wonderful Recipes for Feeding Family and Friends Italian-Style. ■



menu for eight



Shochu Watermelon Lemonade

Poached Shrimp with

Spicy Mayo and Garlic Breadcrumbs

*Tonkatsu and Mixed Herb Salad
with Honey-Lime Dressing*

*Sesame, Snow Pea, and Shiitake
Pasta Salad*

*Pineapple, Strawberry, and
Lychee Parfaits*

Party in the Kitchen

Those who cook together, eat well together, especially when the menu's as fresh and fast as this one.

BY ED SCHOENFELD



WHEN IT COMES TO planning a party menu, I like delicious—it just has to taste good. And if the food's as much fun to make as it is to eat, guests will be happy helping out in the kitchen. That's my kind of party.

This is my kind of food, too—a modern mix of simple, fresh dishes with an Asian bent. The watermelon lemonade gets spiked with shochu, a Japanese (or sometimes Korean) spirit, while the pasta salad takes a new turn with snow peas, shiitake mushrooms, and sesame oil. A tasty twist on shrimp cocktail includes spicy mayo and crisp garlic breadcrumbs, and crunchy panko-breaded pork cutlets are topped with a Thai-inspired herb salad. Dessert is do-ahead (because your guests deserve a break by then): pineapple parfaits with mint, strawberries, and lychees. Like I said, easy and just a little exotic.



shochu watermelon lemonade

Shochu is a Japanese or Korean spirit typically distilled from barley, sweet potatoes, or rice. It has a light, slightly sweet, nutty flavor. You can substitute vodka, if you like.

Yields 8 cups; serves 8

- 4 cups peeled, seeded, and cubed watermelon (from about 4½ lb. unpeeled watermelon), plus thin wedges for garnish**
- ¾ cup fresh lemon juice (from 4 or 5 lemons), plus thin lemon slices for garnish**
- ¾ cup granulated sugar**
- 1 cup shochu, chilled; more to taste**

Purée the watermelon in a blender or food processor until smooth. Strain the purée through a fine sieve—you'll need 2 cups of watermelon juice. In a large bowl or pitcher, mix the watermelon juice, lemon juice, sugar, shochu, and 4 cups water until the sugar is dissolved. Refrigerate until well chilled, at least 2 hours and up to 6 hours.

When ready to serve, add more shochu to taste, if necessary. Serve in tall glasses filled with ice, garnished with a slice of lemon and a wedge of watermelon.

To drink

After cocktails, or with the meal, pour a Riesling with citrusy notes, like the Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Spätlese (\$22). A smooth, mildly bitter lager such as Brooklyn Lager is a great beer option.

poached shrimp with spicy mayo and garlic breadcrumbs

To eat, guests dip each shrimp in the spicy mayo and then in the breadcrumbs.

Serves 8

- ½ cup vegetable oil**
- 2½ Tbs. minced garlic**
- 2 tsp. cornstarch**
- Kosher salt**
- 4 slices home-style white sandwich bread (such as Arnold or Pepperidge Farm)**
- 1 Tbs. olive oil or melted butter**
- 1 cup mayonnaise**
- ½ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro**
- ¼ cup finely chopped scallion**
- 1 Tbs. minced jalapeño; more to taste**
- 1 Tbs. fresh lime juice**
- 2 lb. jumbo shrimp (16 to 20 per lb.), shelled, with tail segment left intact, and deveined**

Make the breadcrumbs: Heat the vegetable oil in a small wok or saucepan over high heat until shimmering hot. In a small bowl, mix the garlic with the cornstarch and a pinch of salt. Put the garlic mixture in a fine sieve and shake to remove the excess cornstarch. Fry the garlic in the oil, stirring gently, until the garlic is light golden, about 1 minute. Immediately strain the garlic and oil through the sieve set over a bowl. Transfer the garlic to a paper-towel-lined plate, dab gently with paper towels to absorb excess oil, and let cool to room

temperature. Reserve the garlic-flavored oil in the refrigerator for another use (such as vinaigrettes or grilled bread).

Heat the oven to 275°F. Pulse the bread in a food processor until the crumbs are uniform in size, 5 or 6 pulses. In a large bowl, mix the crumbs with the olive oil or butter until evenly coated. Transfer the crumbs to a rimmed baking sheet and bake, stirring once or twice, until golden brown, 20 to 30 minutes. Let the crumbs cool to room temperature. Transfer the crumbs to a medium, shallow serving bowl and stir in 1½ tsp. of the reserved fried garlic. Save the remaining garlic for the mayo.

Make the spicy mayo: In a small bowl, mix the mayonnaise, cilantro, scallion, jalapeño, lime juice, 1 tsp. salt, and the remaining 2 Tbs. fried garlic. Add more jalapeño and salt to taste. Transfer to a small serving bowl.

Cook the shrimp: Bring 7 cups of very well salted water to a boil in a 3-quart saucepan over high heat. Add the shrimp, stir once or twice, and poach until just cooked through, 1½ to 2 minutes (the water will not return to a boil). Drain the shrimp and let them cool for 10 minutes. Transfer the shrimp to a platter and serve them slightly warm or at room temperature with the mayo and breadcrumbs.

Make ahead: The breadcrumbs and mayo may be prepared up to 1 day ahead. Store separately in airtight containers; refrigerate the mayo.

the dinner plan

- **2 days ahead:** Prepare the pineapple for the parfaits.
- **1 day ahead:** Make the spicy mayo and garlic breadcrumbs for the shrimp appetizer, and the dressing for the herb salad.
- **6 hours ahead:** Make the watermelon lemonade; toss the undressed herb salad.
- **4 hours ahead:** Bread the pork cutlets.
- **2 hours ahead:** Make the pasta salad.
- **1 hour ahead:** Macerate the strawberries.
- **Before serving:** Poach the shrimp; fry the pork cutlets; dress the herb salad; garnish the cocktails and parfaits.

Start the party off right with addictive finger food and refreshing cocktails.



Group cook: the more the merrier, and the faster dinner's done.



tonkatsu and mixed herb salad

Tonkatsu is a classic Japanese dish in which a thin pork cutlet is breaded and fried. It's typically served with shredded green cabbage, but here it's topped with a fresh herb salad (see recipe, opposite).

Serves 8

- 2½ lb. boneless center-cut pork loin, trimmed**
- 2 medium cloves garlic, lightly crushed**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour**
- 3 large eggs**
- 3 Tbs. vegetable oil; more for frying**
- 3 cups panko (Japanese breadcrumbs)**
- 1 recipe Mixed Herb Salad with Honey-Lime Dressing (recipe opposite)**

Heat the oven to 200°F.

Slice the pork into 16 equal pieces. Lay a sheet of plastic wrap over a piece of pork and pound until it's about ¼ inch thick. With a sharp knife, make tiny incisions at 2-inch intervals around the edge of the cutlet (this will help prevent it from curling as it cooks). Repeat with the remaining pork.

Rub both sides of each cutlet with the crushed garlic and then season generously with salt and pepper.

Put the flour in a wide, shallow bowl. Put the eggs in another wide, shallow bowl and beat them lightly with 3 Tbs. water, the oil, and ¾ tsp. salt. Put the panko in a third wide, shallow bowl. Working with one cutlet at a time, dredge the pork in the flour and then the egg mixture, shaking to remove excess. Dredge in the panko,

pressing the crumbs into the cutlet to help them adhere. As the cutlets are coated, transfer them to a rimmed baking sheet.

In a large, deep, straight-sided sauté pan (a cast-iron skillet works well), heat about ¼ inch of oil over medium-high heat until shimmering hot. Working in batches, cook 3 cutlets at a time, flipping once, until golden brown and cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Drain the cutlets on a paper-towel-lined baking sheet and keep warm in the oven until all of the pork is cooked.

Portion the cutlets among 8 dinner plates and mound the Mixed Herb Salad with Honey-Lime Dressing on top.

Make ahead: The cutlets can be breaded up to 4 hours ahead. Refrigerate until ready to fry.



MIXED HERB SALAD WITH HONEY-LIME DRESSING

A riff on the cabbage slaw traditionally served with tonkatsu, this salad goes the extra flavor mile with lots of fresh herbs, crunchy vegetables, and a tangy Thai-inspired dressing.

Serves 8

FOR THE SALAD

- 4 cups mixed mesclun greens
- 2 cups coarsely chopped bibb lettuce
- 1 cup very thinly sliced green cabbage
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves, preferably Thai basil, large leaves coarsely torn
- 1 cup fresh mint leaves
- 1 cup fresh cilantro leaves, coarsely chopped
- 4 small scallions (white and green parts), sliced into 1-inch lengths

- 1 cup cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup very thinly sliced red onion
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup very thinly sliced red bell pepper

FOR THE DRESSING

- 2½ Tbs. fresh lime juice
- 2½ Tbs. honey
- 2 tsp. fish sauce
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. minced garlic
- 2 Tbs. thinly sliced fresh red or green chile or both (optional)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

MAKE THE SALAD

In a large bowl, combine the mesclun, lettuce, cabbage, basil, mint, cilantro, scallions, tomatoes, onion, and bell pepper.

MAKE THE DRESSING

In a small bowl, whisk the lime juice, honey, fish sauce, garlic, and chile, if using. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Just before serving, toss the salad mixture with just enough of the dressing to coat the salad lightly—you may not need all of the dressing.

Make ahead: You can combine, cover, and refrigerate the salad ingredients up to 6 hours ahead. The dressing can be made up to 1 day ahead.



Clockwise from top left: Mixed Herb Salad with Honey-Lime Dressing; Sesame, Snow Pea, and Shiitake Pasta Salad; and Tonkatsu.



pineapple, strawberry, and lychee parfaits

Crushed fresh pineapple infused with mint serves as a refreshing base for summer berries and lychees in this cool parfait. (For more on lychees, see Test Kitchen, p. 81.) The leftover pineapple syrup would be great in rum cocktails or mixed with seltzer for a nonalcoholic drink.

Serves 6 to 8

- 2 medium ripe pineapples (about 3 lb. each)**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 2 Tbs. granulated sugar**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup small fresh mint sprigs; more for garnish**
- 4 cups ripe strawberries, hulled, halved lengthwise if large**
- 16 fresh lychees, shelled and pitted, or one 20-oz. can lychees, drained, rinsed, and halved lengthwise if large**

Trim the pineapples and quarter them lengthwise. Cut away the cores and rinds of each quarter and cut the pineapple into $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces. Working in batches, pulse the pineapple in a food processor until crushed or about the size of grains of rice (it's fine if a few pieces are larger or smaller).

In a large nonreactive saucepan, bring $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the sugar and 2 cups of water to a boil over high heat. Add the pineapple and let the mixture return to a hard boil. With a spoon, skim away and discard any foam that rises to the surface. Boil for 1 minute and then remove the pan from the heat. Add the mint sprigs and let the mixture cool to room temperature. Remove and discard the mint. Cover and refrigerate until well chilled, at least 4 hours and up to 2 days.

One hour before serving, in a small bowl, mix the strawberries with the remaining 2 Tbs. sugar and refrigerate.

To serve, drain the liquid from the pineapple in a sieve set over a bowl. Divide the pineapple into clear glasses, saving the syrup for another use. Top with the strawberries and lychees and garnish with a sprig of fresh mint.

Ed Schoenfeld is a chef, restaurant consultant, and Chinese food expert based in Brooklyn, New York. ■



Get a shopping list for this menu at FineCooking.com/extras.

sesame, snow pea, and shiitake pasta salad

Two kinds of green peas, sesame, ginger, and soy give this earthy pasta salad bold flavor.

Serves 8

- Kosher salt**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. dried rolled, tubular pasta (such as cavatelli or strozzapreti)**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup frozen baby green peas**
- 40 fresh snow peas (4 to 5 oz.), trimmed**
- 3 Tbs. vegetable oil**
- 1 cup thinly sliced yellow onion**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and sliced $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick (about 3 cups)**
- 1 tsp. minced garlic**
- 1 tsp. minced fresh ginger**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- 4 tsp. soy sauce**
- 1 Tbs. rice vinegar**
- 2 tsp. Asian sesame oil**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. granulated sugar**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup thinly sliced scallions (white and green parts)**
- 2 Tbs. toasted white sesame seeds**

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the pasta and cook until barely al dente, about 1 minute

less than package timing. Add the green peas and cook for about 30 seconds. Add the snow peas, stir, and immediately drain the vegetables and pasta in a colander set in the sink. Rinse with cool water to stop the cooking. Drain well, toss with 1 Tbs. of the vegetable oil, and set aside.

Heat 1 Tbs. of the vegetable oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the onion, shiitake, garlic, ginger, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt, and a few grinds of pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are opaque and the mushrooms have released their juices, 3 to 4 minutes—don't let the vegetables brown. Remove the pan from the heat, transfer the vegetables and any juices to a small bowl, and let cool to room temperature.

In another small bowl, whisk the remaining 1 Tbs. vegetable oil with the soy sauce, vinegar, sesame oil, and sugar.

In a large bowl, combine the cooled pasta and vegetables, scallions, and 1 Tbs. of the sesame seeds. Toss with the dressing and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve at room temperature, garnished with the remaining sesame seeds.

Make ahead: You can prepare the salad up to 2 hours ahead.

WEEKEND PROJECT





MAKE YOUR OWN FETA

From curds to whey and where they separate—a step-by-step guide to a classic Mediterranean cheese. **BY BONNIE GORDER-HINCHEY**

NOTHING COMPARES to the fresh taste of homemade cheese. And tangy, rich feta is one of the easiest to make at home. It's also an excellent “summer” cheese, the perfect partner to all those ripe tomatoes and gorgeous cucumbers available now.

Traditionally made with sheep's milk, feta is equally delicious when made from store-bought cow's milk. What gives it the distinctive sharp taste and crumbly texture is a week or more spent soaking, or aging, in a brine. Once you get your first taste of homemade feta, you'll agree it was worth the wait.

To understand the science behind cheesemaking, it's helpful to remember that it began as a way of preserving milk. You start by encouraging milk to curdle so that you can separate the solid portion (the curds) from the liquid (the whey). Rennet, a natural enzyme, is added to cause curdling. You also add live cultures,

here in the form of yogurt—these “eat” the milk sugar (lactose) and produce an acid that lowers the milk's pH. That acidic environment, along with heat, helps the rennet curdle the milk.

Once the milk coagulates, you cut into it to let the whey flow out. The remaining whey is drained off by hanging the curd in cheesecloth for 24 hours at room temperature. Once drained, the cheese will have re-formed into a solid mass, ready to be cut into cubes and then sprinkled with salt to draw out any remaining whey. After three days, the cheese is put into a brine and aged for one to four weeks in the refrigerator.

Although the cheese is ready to eat after one week, longer aging results in firmer, saltier, and more flavorful feta. When you make your own, you control the flavor and intensity of the tang, so you can make a feta that's your idea of “just right.”



1



2



3

homemade feta

To achieve the correct level of saltiness, be sure to weigh the salt; for more on this, see Test Kitchen, p. 81. Before starting, it's important to read the safety tips on p. 74. To learn more about lipase, calcium chloride, and rennet, see p. 74 as well.

Yields 1½ lb.

FOR THE CHEESE

- ½ cup plain low-fat yogurt with live cultures
- 1 gallon whole pasteurized milk
- ¼ tsp. lipase powder, preferably calf
- ¾ tsp. calcium chloride
- ¼ tsp. liquid rennet
- 1½ oz. kosher salt (6 Tbs. if using Diamond Crystal; 3 Tbs. if using Morton)

FOR THE BRINE

- 2 oz. kosher salt (½ cup if using Diamond Crystal; ¼ cup if using Morton)

DAY 1: MAKE THE CHEESE CURD

Sterilize all the equipment you will need for this first day of work (see Safety First, p. 74). Clean all counters with hot soapy water or an antibacterial wipe.

In a small bowl, mix the yogurt with ½ cup of the milk.

In a deep 8- to 10-quart pot, heat the remaining milk over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally with a slotted spoon, until it registers 90°F on an instant-read thermometer, 10 to 12 minutes. Stir in the yogurt mixture. Turn off the heat (leave the pot on the burner), cover, and let sit for 45 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl with a soup-spoon, stir the lipase with ¼ cup water until blended—it doesn't matter if the lipase stays a little lumpy. Let sit for 20 minutes. Stir in the calcium chloride and rennet until the mixture is smooth and blended.

Turn the burner under the milk mixture to medium low, add the lipase mixture and stir with a slotted spoon for 1 minute. Stop the movement of the milk with the spoon and hold a thermometer in the center of the milk—the temperature should be at least 96°F; if necessary, continue heating until it comes up to temperature.

Remove the thermometer, turn off the heat, cover the pot, and let sit undisturbed until the curd is firm and has a clean “cleave,” 1 to 3 hours. To determine a clean cleave, wash your hands with soap and hot water and insert a finger (or a sterilized spoon) 1 inch diagonally into the curd and pull straight up. If the cleave is clean, the curd will split with sharp edges and whey will start to fill the split **1**.

A Cheesemaker's Tool Box

It takes five days to ready the feta for brining. All tools must be sterilized to prevent unwanted bacteria from contaminating the cheese. (To learn how to sterilize your equipment, see page 74.) Here are the tools you'll need each day. All tools should be heatproof.

TOOLS FOR DAY 1



Instant-read thermometer



Deep 8- to 10-quart heavy-based pot with lid



One large and two small bowls or ramekins



Table knife



1-cup and 1-quart liquid measuring cups



Large colander



CUT THE CURD

With a table knife, cut the curd all the way to the bottom of the pot in a ½-inch crosshatch pattern **2**. Turn the heat to low and heat for 5 minutes. Stir the curd with the slotted spoon and insert a thermometer; it should read at least 96°F. If not, continue heating, stirring occasionally, until the curds come up to temperature, increasing the heat to medium low, if necessary.

Turn off the heat, cover the pot, and let sit for 1 hour, stirring every 10 minutes to break up large chunks.

DRAIN THE CURD

Set a large colander over a large bowl and line it with 2 layers of cheesecloth. Pour the curd into the strainer and drain off the whey for 30 minutes **3**. Put 1 quart of the whey in a sterile 1-quart liquid measuring cup, cover, and set aside at room temperature.

Gather the ends of the cheesecloth and tie them loosely at the top of the curd **4**; then tie them around a long spoon or several chopsticks. Hang the bag inside the pot at room temperature for 24 hours **5**, loosely covering the top with plastic wrap. After 24 hours, you should feel a firm, solid mass of curds; if not, let the curd hang for another few hours and check again for firmness.

DAY 2: SALT THE FETA

Sterilize the equipment you'll need for this day of work. Clean all counters with hot soapy water or an antibacterial wipe. Untie the cheesecloth and transfer the feta to a cutting board.

Cut the feta into 2- to 3-inch pieces. If you see small, uniform, round holes throughout the cheese when you cut it, and it feels spongy, that means undesirable bacteria

have contaminated it and you should throw it out. Otherwise, arrange the squares in a single layer in a sterile shallow container with a tight-fitting lid. Sprinkle about ½ oz. salt over all sides of the cheese **6**. Cover and let sit at room temperature for 3 days. Turn the feta daily and resalt with ½ oz. salt on days 3 and 4. Each day, pour off the whey as it collects in the bottom of the container.

DAY 5: BRINE THE FETA



Sterilize a 3-quart covered container. Transfer the cheese pieces to the container—it's fine to stack them at this point. Stir the 2 oz. kosher salt into the 1 quart of reserved whey until it is dissolved. Pour this brine over the cheese, covering it completely. Cover and refrigerate for 1 to 4 weeks. The longer the feta is aged, the stronger the flavor and crumblier the texture will be.



For sources, see Where to Buy It

Timeline: Making Feta

Making your own feta does take time, but much of it is hands off. Here's how you get from a gallon of milk to 1½ lb. of cheese in less than two weeks (longer for a more intense cheese).

DAY 1		DAY 2		DAY 5		DAY 12	
							
Mix ingredients and heat. Let sit until the curd firms. Cut, heat, and rest the curds again, then drain in cheesecloth for 24 hours.		Untie the cheesecloth and cut the feta into pieces. Salt and let sit at room temperature for three days.		Pour the brine over the cheese and let age for a week.		After a week, the feta is ready to taste. For a firmer, saltier cheese, continue to age it for up to three more weeks.	



Cheese Science

Making your own cheese requires a few specialty ingredients: rennet, lipase, and calcium chloride. All are readily available online at sites like cheesemaking.com or thecheesemaker.com. Here's what each is and what it does:

Rennet An enzyme that sets, or curdles, the milk so that it becomes solid. Sold in liquid or tablet form, it must be kept refrigerated or it will lose its potency. Traditionally, rennet comes from the stomach of a calf, lamb, or goat, but today there are vegetarian versions available. All have the same coagulating ability.

Lipase An enzyme derived from animals that breaks down milk fat and creates feta's distinctive taste. Calf lipase produces the mildest flavor, while lamb lipase is used for the sharpest cheeses, such as Romano. It's sold in powder form.

Calcium Chloride Because pasteurization removes calcium from processed milk, you must add calcium chloride to aid coagulation. It is sold in liquid form and is necessary for a firm curd.

Safety First

Cheesemaking relies on good bacteria (the kind found in yogurt) as a preservative. But there are other types of bacteria you need to watch out for, to avoid illness. Basic home sanitizing measures can eliminate much of the danger. Follow these steps:

Clean counters with antibacterial wipes and wash your hands thoroughly before beginning (and throughout the process, as necessary).

Sterilize all equipment, in one of three ways:

1. Wash in hot, soapy water, rinse, and then submerge in boiling water for at least 10 minutes.
2. Steam by putting an inch of water in the bottom of a large pot, adding the equipment, covering the pot tightly, and boiling for 10 minutes. (If the cover doesn't fit, put aluminum foil over it to trap the steam.)
3. Use the sanitize setting on your dishwasher.

Do not use bleach in cleaning the equipment, as this can interfere with the chemistry of cheesemaking.

If at any point in the making or aging process you see small, uniform, round holes throughout the cheese, and it feels spongy, throw it out.

Details on food safety practices are available on the United States Food and Drug Administration's Web site at www.cfsan.fda.gov.

Bonnie Gorder-Hinchey is a food scientist and culinary consultant based in Seattle. ■



Take a feta-making class at FineCooking.com/extras.



The Cheese Plate

3 EASY IDEAS

- Top feta with extra-virgin olive oil and serve with olives and crusty bread (pictured).
- Drizzle feta with honey and cracked black peppercorns; serve with crackers.
- Dress feta with fresh herbs and lemon juice and bake at 375°F until golden on top; spread on crusty bread.

Eggplant Parmigiana

The real-deal Italian classic takes on a chef's rustic reinvention. May the best version win. BY LAURA GIANNATEMPO AND MIKEY PRICE

the classic...



Southern Exposure

It's commonly believed that eggplant parmigiana originated in southern Italy (Naples, to be precise), where eggplant is widely cultivated.



Bread Not

No breading in this parmigiana. In Italy, the eggplant slices are fried quickly in hot olive oil.



Slim Down

Forget big, chewy chunks of eggplant. To create slender, delicate layers for a lighter, more elegant dish, peel the eggplant and cut it into thin slices.



Say Cheese

Parmigiano-Reggiano is a key ingredient (it gives the dish its name after all). Made around Parma from raw cow's milk, it's a rich, hard cheese that's aged for at least 12 months.



IF YOU THINK YOU KNOW EGGPLANT PARMIGIANA, think again. *Fine Cooking* associate editor and Italian native Laura Giannatempo gave us the definitive classic—a surprisingly lighter dish than most Americans are used to, since it skips the expected breading of the eggplant. Mikey Price, chef at New York's seasonally driven Market Table, contributed the competition: an addictive first course that features breadcrumb-coated zucchini ribbons rolled around an eggplant filling. It's going to be one tasty showdown.



...the update

Med Fusion

Eggplant parmigiana meets fried zucchini in an all-Italian celebration of the harvest season.

On a Roll

No layers here. Instead, thin zucchini ribbons create the perfect wrap.



Inside Story

It's inside the roll where eggplant marries with tomato sauce and Parmigiano-Reggiano to create the essence of eggplant parmigiana.

Nuts and Bolts

Toasted pine nuts mixed with the eggplant filling and sprinkled on top add a welcome textural variation.



LAURA SAID,

“This is how we do it in Italy: no breading and no puddles of cheese, just thin layers of fried eggplant with homemade sauce, a little fresh mozzarella, and good Parmigiano-Reggiano. It doesn’t get more authentic than this.”

the classic...

eggplant parmigiana

**Serves 6 as a first course;
4 as a main course**

FOR THE EGGPLANT

- 2½ lb. eggplant (about 4 small or 2 medium-large)
- Kosher salt
- 3 cups olive oil (or a blend of olive and canola oils)

FOR THE SAUCE

- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 large cloves garlic, peeled and cut in half
- 3½ lb. plum tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and coarsely chopped, or two 28-oz. cans diced tomatoes (preferably San Marzano), drained
- Kosher salt
- 12 large fresh basil leaves, torn in half

FOR ASSEMBLING

- 6 oz. fresh mozzarella, torn into ½-inch pieces
- 1¼ cups lightly packed freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (3¼ oz.)

Salt the eggplant: Peel the eggplant and cut each crosswise into ¼-inch-thick slices. Cover the bottom and sides of a large colander with a few eggplant slices and sprinkle generously with salt. Top with more layers of eggplant and salt until you run out of slices (you’ll end up with five or six layers). Let the colander sit in the sink or over a large bowl for at least 30 minutes and up to 2 hours.

The salt will draw out water and reduce the eggplant’s ability to absorb oil.

Meanwhile, make the sauce: Heat the 3 Tbs. oil in a 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant and barely golden, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes and ½ tsp. salt. Raise the heat to medium high and cook, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes begin to break down into a sauce, 20 to 25 minutes. If the sauce begins to dry up before the tomatoes break down, add warm water 1 Tbs. at a time. Lower the heat to medium and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until you have a thick, chunky sauce, 5 to 10 minutes more. (Too much liquid in the sauce will make the finished dish watery.) Turn off the heat, remove the garlic, and stir in the basil leaves. Season to taste with more salt, if necessary, and set aside.

Fry the eggplant: Dry the eggplant by lining a large plate with a paper towel and setting a few slices on it. Top with another paper towel and layer on a few more slices. Repeat until you run out of slices.

Attach a candy thermometer to the side of a 3- or 4-quart saucepan. Add the olive oil and heat over medium-high heat. When the oil reaches 375°F, add as many eggplant slices as will fit comfortably in a single layer. Don’t crowd the pan. If you don’t have a candy thermometer, you can test the oil temperature by dipping a tip of one eggplant slice in the oil. If it immediately sizzles, the oil is ready.

Cook, turning once, until golden brown on both sides, about 2 minutes on the first side and 1 minute more on the second. Working quickly, pick up each slice with a slotted spoon and press the back of another large spoon against the slice to squeeze out as much oil as possible. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels. Repeat until all the slices are fried, layering the fried eggplant between paper towels and adjusting the heat as necessary to maintain the frying temperature.

Assemble and bake: Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F.

Layer about one-third of the eggplant slices so they overlap slightly on the bottom of a 10x8-inch (or similar size) baking dish. With the back of a spoon or an offset spatula, spread about one-third of the tomato sauce in a very thin layer over the eggplant. Evenly sprinkle about half of the mozzarella and ½ cup of the Parmigiano over the tomato sauce. Make another layer with one-third of the eggplant, one-third of the tomato sauce, the remaining mozzarella, and ½ cup Parmigiano. Make one last layer with the remaining eggplant, tomato sauce, and Parmigiano. Bake until the cheese has melted evenly and the top is bubbly, with browned edges, 20 to 25 minutes. Let rest for at least 15 minutes before serving.



Which version is your favorite? Go to FineCooking.com/extras and let us know.

...the update

eggplant parmigiana rolls with pine nuts and baby arugula

Serves 8 as an appetizer

- 4½ Tbs. plus ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ medium yellow onion, cut into medium dice
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 3 cups peeled, seeded, and chopped fresh plum tomatoes (6 to 8 tomatoes)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbs. pitted and very coarsely chopped Kalamata or Niçoise olives
- 1 Tbs. capers, rinsed and coarsely chopped if large
- 1 Tbs. plus ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1 baby (Italian) eggplant (about ½ lb.) or ½ small regular eggplant, cut into large dice (2½ cups)
- 2 Tbs. finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- 2 Tbs. toasted pine nuts
- 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice (from 1 lemon)
- 1 Tbs. thinly sliced fresh basil
- 3 small zucchini (about 1 lb. total)
- 2 cups panko
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 5 oz. baby arugula (6 lightly packed cups)
- ¼ cup shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano

Heat 1 Tbs. olive oil in a 3-quart saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook

until soft and slightly browned, about 3 minutes. Add the tomatoes, ¼ tsp. salt, and a grind of pepper and simmer, stirring frequently, until the tomatoes cook down to a dry sauce, 20 to 25 minutes, reducing the heat to medium low if necessary. Off the heat, stir in the olives, capers, ½ Tbs. olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste.

Heat 1 Tbs. each olive oil and vegetable oil in a 12-inch skillet over high heat. Add the eggplant and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender and well browned on several sides, 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and cool to room temperature.

To the eggplant, add the finely grated Parmigiano, 1 Tbs. of the pine nuts, 1 Tbs. lemon juice, the basil, and about half of the tomato sauce. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Using a mandoline, slice the zucchini lengthwise about ⅛ inch thick. Select the 24 widest, longest slices and arrange them in a single layer on paper towels. Sprinkle lightly with salt and let sit until pliable, about 3 minutes—you can shingle the layers of zucchini between paper towels to save space. Pat dry. Arrange 3 slices of zucchini on a work surface, overlapping them lengthwise. Spread a heaping tablespoon of the eggplant mixture near one end of the zucchini ribbons and roll the zucchini around the filling to make a roll. Set

aside, seam side down, and repeat with the remaining ingredients to make 8 rolls total. You may not need all the filling.

Put the panko, flour, and eggs in 3 shallow bowls. Lightly coat each roll in the flour, then dip it in the eggs, and coat in the bread-crumbs—it's fine if it isn't perfectly coated.

Heat the ½ cup olive oil and ½ cup vegetable oil in a 10-inch straight-sided sauté pan over medium heat. Working in two batches, fry the rolls until golden brown on all sides, 2 to 3 minutes per side. As each batch finishes, transfer to a paper-towel-lined plate and sprinkle lightly with salt.

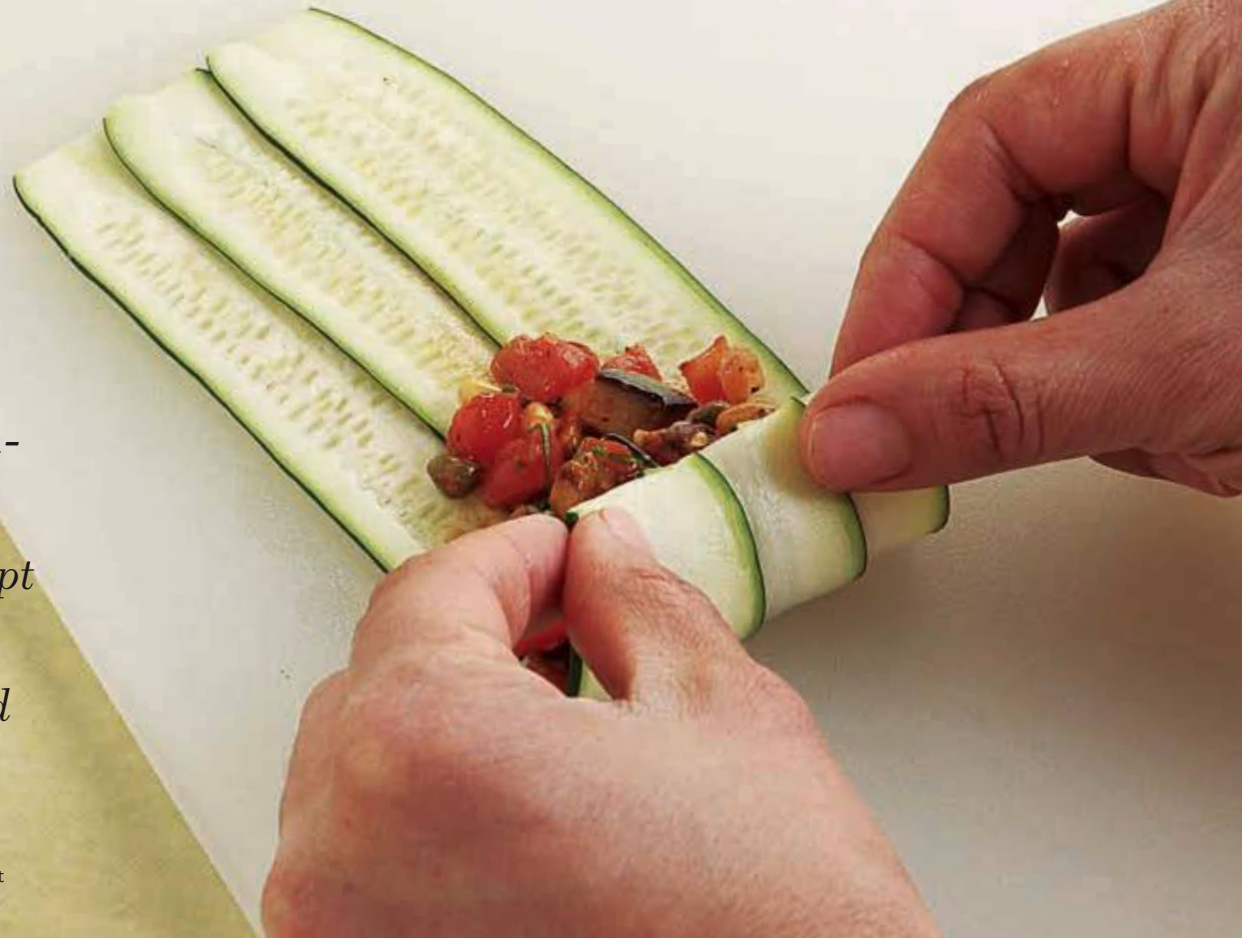
While the rolls cook, reheat the remaining sauce in a small saucepan, adding about ¼ cup water, or enough to thin to a wet sauce.

Whisk the remaining 2 Tbs. olive oil and 1 Tbs. lemon juice in a small bowl. Toss the arugula with the dressing and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve the rolls topped with the sauce, remaining pine nuts, and shaved Parmigiano, with the salad on the side.

Laura Giannatempo is the author of A Ligurian Kitchen: Recipes and Tales from the Italian Riviera. Mikey Price is working on his first cookbook. □

MIKEY SAID,

"I just plain don't like traditional eggplant parmigiana. But I do like the breading and frying part, so I kept that and changed everything else to make it fresher and more modern."



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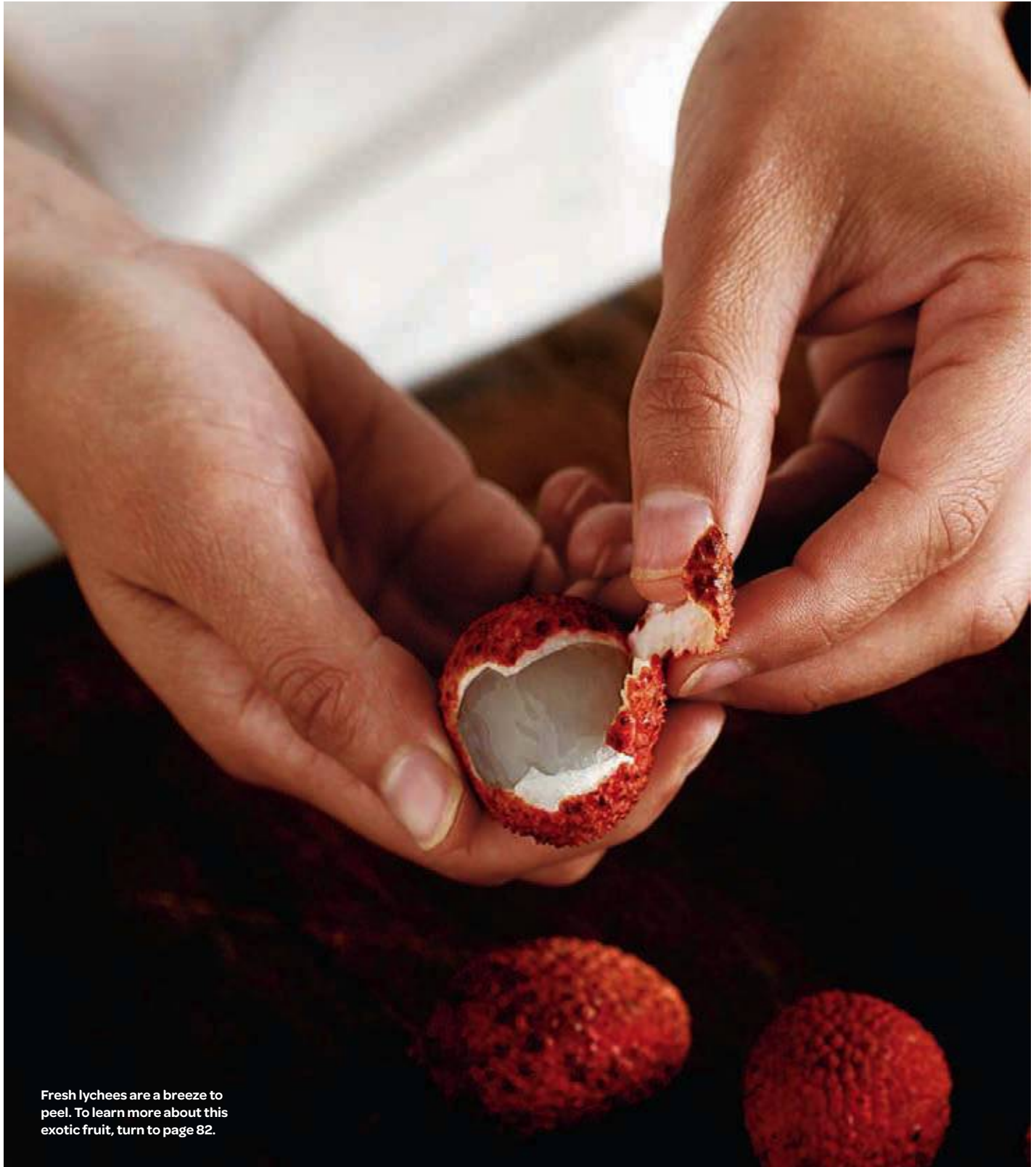
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TEST KITCHEN

Tips/Techniques/Equipment/Ingredients/Glossary



Fresh lychees are a breeze to peel. To learn more about this exotic fruit, turn to page 82.



INGREDIENT

Lychee fruit

BENEATH THE SCALY SKIN of the lychee lies a delicate, juicy, fragrant fruit wrapped around a hard, inedible pit. With a sweet perfumed flavor and a texture a bit like a peeled grape, lychees (or litchis) are prized in many Asian countries, particularly China.

Lychees are readily available in cans, but if you see some fresh ones at the market—Asian markets are a great place to look—don't pass up the chance to try them. They're available from May to September.

Choose lychees that feel heavy for their size, with brittle, unblemished, reddish-pink to pinkish-brown skin. Store at room temperature for a few days, or in a plastic bag in the fridge for about two weeks.

Lychees are easy to peel—just pull the skin away with your fingernails. If eating out of hand, you can pop the peeled fruit into your mouth and spit out the pit, but if you need pitted lychees for a dessert like the Pineapple, Strawberry, and Lychee Parfaits on page 69, treat them as you would a peach: Run a paring knife around the pit to halve the fruit and then pry the halves from the pit.

—Jennifer Armentrout

TECHNIQUE

Lobster 101

Unless you grew up near the New England shore, preparing and cracking a lobster may not be second nature. Here's what you need to know to become a lobster pro.

KILLING THE LOBSTER

No matter how you plan to cook your lobster, you should kill it first. While it's tempting to skip the execution part and just boil the live lobster—it'll die as it cooks, after all—that's a slow and cruel death. Here's the most humane way to quickly dispatch a lobster before cooking:

Chill the lobster in the freezer for 20 minutes—this numbs it and slows down its movements, making it safer to work with. Set the lobster on its back on a cutting board. Position the tip of a chef's knife in the middle of the lobster just below the claws, with the cutting edge facing the lobster's head (shown below).

In one swift motion, forcefully insert the point of the knife into the lobster and then chop down through the head, splitting it in half—this kills the lobster quickly. It isn't necessary to cut completely through the shell on the top of the head, and if you don't, the cooked lobster will look more appealing. The lobster may continue to move a bit, so cut off the rubber bands that bind the claws only after it has been cooked.



EATING THE LOBSTER

To eat the cooked lobster, you'll need a knife, a lobster cracker or nutcracker, and a seafood fork or pick.

A The knuckles and claws

1. Separate the knuckles and claws from the body in one piece by twisting them off or cutting with a knife. Separate the knuckles and claws at each joint.

2. Use a cracker to break open each piece. Remove the nuggets of meat with a seafood fork or pick.

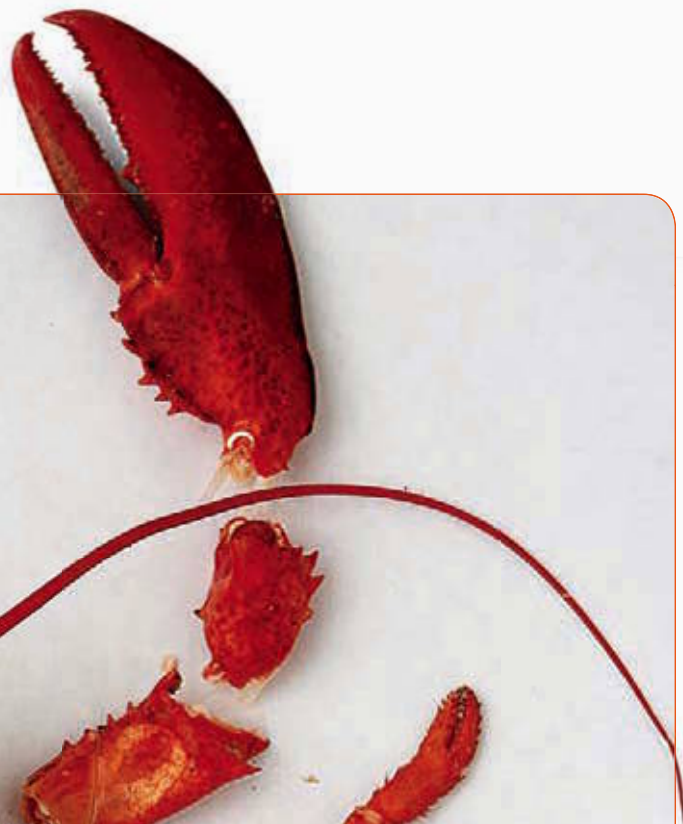
B The tail

1. Twist the tail off the body of the lobster. If the lobster is female, you might get the bonus of bright red roe, which is edible. The greenish substance between the tail and body is the liver and pancreas, called the tomalley. Many consider it a delicacy, but toxins can be concentrated in it, and several public health agencies caution against eating it. If any sticks to the tail meat, wipe or rinse it off.

Photographs by Scott Phillips



A

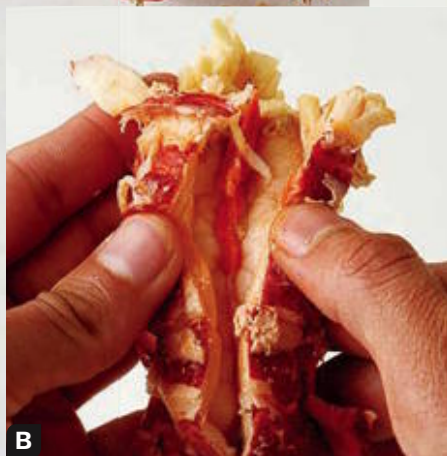


C

2. Bend the tail fins upward until they snap off. Check the fins for any morsels of meat to pick out.

3. Use a finger or a fork to push the tail meat out of the shell.

4. Make a shallow incision down the center top of the tail to expose the vein-like intestinal tract (it may be dark or clear). Flick out the tract with the knife tip, just as you would devein a shrimp.



B



C The legs

1. Snap the smaller legs off the body.

2. Pick out any morsels of meat from the body where the legs were. To get the bits of meat from the legs, bite down on a leg to loosen the meat, and then squeeze and suck the meat out between your teeth.

—Melissa Pellegrino and
Jennifer Armentrout



INGREDIENT

Measuring kosher salt

Most of our recipes call for kosher salt by the teaspoon, but you might have noticed that our feta recipe on page 72 calls for the salt by weight. The reason for this is simple but important: From brand to brand, equal weights of kosher salt may not measure the same by volume. In the photo below you can see that 2 ounces of Morton salt is exactly $\frac{1}{4}$ cup, but 2 ounces of Diamond Crystal overflows an identical measuring cup. That 2 ounces actually fills a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup measure perfectly. Why? Because Morton's crystals are denser than Diamond Crystal's.

When a recipe calls for a relatively small amount of salt, this distinction isn't very noticeable. Since this is the case with most of our recipes, we usually just call for salt by volume and leave it up to the cook to salt to taste at the end of a recipe. But the feta recipe requires a hefty $3\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of salt. Depending on the brand, that's anywhere from 7 to 14 tablespoons, which is why we recommend going by weight for this recipe.

We prefer Diamond Crystal kosher salt for the lighter and flakier shape of its crystals. They stick to foods rather than bouncing off, and they blend better. Plus, Diamond Crystal is pure salt, with no anti-caking additive.

—J.A.



TECHNIQUE

How to dice a mango

MANGOS CONTAIN A LARGE, FLAT SEED that doesn't separate readily from the juicy flesh, so the easiest way to handle a mango is to cut the flesh away from the seed. Mango flesh can be slippery, so leaving the skin on will help you get a grip.



Balance the mango on one of its narrow sides, and then slice off one of the wide sides of the fruit. Try to cut as close to the seed as possible, usually about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the center. Repeat with the other wide side and then slice off the remaining strips of fruit from the narrow sides.



To dice the wide pieces of mango, cup one in your palm and use a paring knife to score the fruit into the dice size you want. Try to cut down to but not through the skin, and hold the mango with a kitchen towel to protect your hand in case the knife does pierce the mango skin.



Use your fingertips to pop the mango inside out and then use the paring knife to slice the cubes away from the skin.



To dice the narrow strips of mango, simply trim away the skin and cut.

—J.A.

GLOSSARY

Melted butter

OUR STORY ON GRILLING SHELLFISH (page 42) includes three dipping sauces, but you may want to keep it simple and just serve melted butter. Here are two ways to go.

Drawn butter is often served as a dipping sauce for shellfish, especially lobster. There's a lot of disagreement, though, as to what exactly drawn butter is. Most culinary references say it's clarified butter—that is, pure melted butter fat that's been separated from the milk solids and water that are present in whole butter. But talk to a few good chefs and you'll hear the argument that much of the flavor in melted butter comes from those milk solids, so they consider drawn butter to be simply melted butter seasoned with a little salt and pepper and maybe a bit of lemon juice.



Beurre monté is an emulsified butter sauce. When whole butter is melted, the butter fat tends to separate from the milk solids and water. But you can keep this from happening by whisking lumps of cold butter into a couple of tablespoons of extra-warm water. This emulsifies the butter as it melts, and separation doesn't occur. You can use beurre monté in a variety of ways; one of our favorites is as a poaching liquid for lobster and delicate white fish. It also makes a delicious sauce—just add some minced shallots, white wine, and lemon juice for a version of beurre blanc, a classic white wine butter sauce. Or you can add spices to make a dipping sauce, as we did in the Old Bay Dipping Sauce on page 48. If you'd like to make a plain beurre monté, just follow that recipe up to the point where the Old Bay and shallots are added, and season it with a little salt instead.

—J.A. and M.P.



TIP

Cutting corn off the cob

Removing corn kernels from the cob can be messy—they like to bounce off the cutting board and end up scattered all over the counter and floor. To keep those kernels in their place, insert the tip of the ear of corn into the center hole of a Bundt pan. Cut the kernels away from the cob in long downward strokes, letting them fall into the pan.

—M.P.

TECHNIQUE

Deveining shrimp in the shell



The recipe for Grilled Shrimp on page 44 calls for unshelled shrimp, and that means the usual approach to deveining shrimp—splitting the shell to get to the vein—won't work. Fortunately, there's a way to devein shrimp without splitting the shell, and all it takes is a toothpick or a wooden skewer.

Bend the shrimp so the shell sections nearest the tail separate, exposing the flesh. Insert the skewer into the shrimp, digging in deeply enough to get under the vein. Lever the skewer to begin pulling the vein from the shrimp. If you're lucky, you'll get it on the first or second try. Once it pulls out completely, pinch off the end to separate it from the tail.

If the vein breaks at the first tail section, try the next one. Sometimes you can pull out just enough to grasp and finish the job with your fingertips before the vein break.

—J.A.



EQUIPMENT

Ginger peeler

You may already know that when it comes to peeling ginger, scraping the edge of a spoon over the ginger works better than trimming with a paring knife—the knife cuts too deeply into the flesh, while the spoon just grazes the skin. Building on the spoon technique, Oxo has come up with this little ginger-peeling tool. It's not a vast improvement over a spoon, but it has a couple of advantages. The fat rubber handle is more comfortable and easier to grasp than a narrow spoon handle, and its slightly pointed tip helps you maneuver into the grooves between ginger knobs, especially the little ones. It also has a slightly sharper edge than most spoons. If you only occasionally peel ginger, you can stick with a spoon, but if you cook with it often—or if you're a kitchen gadget junkie—then you might want to add this one to your collection. —J.A.

INGREDIENT

Fish sauce

The Honey-Lime Dressing on page 67 and the Thai-Style Sirloin Steak on page 88 get a punch of flavor from fish sauce. This pungent amber-brown liquid is a mainstay in Southeast Asian cooking. Known as nam pla in Thai and nuoc nam in Vietnamese, fish sauce imparts a distinctive salty flavor to many of the region's dishes. Though its aroma is strongly fishy straight from the bottle, cooking mellows it considerably, as does combining it with other assertive ingredients, like lime juice, chile, and garlic.

Fish sauce is made from freshly caught fish that are too small for substantial eating, such as anchovies. The fish are packed between layers of salt in an earthenware vessel. A bamboo mat is placed over the final layer and topped with a weight to keep the fish in place. They are then covered with an airtight top and set in a warm sunny spot where they are left to ferment for nine months and up to a year. As the fish break down, they produce a brown liquid—the fish sauce—which is drained from a spigot at the bottom of the container. —M.P.



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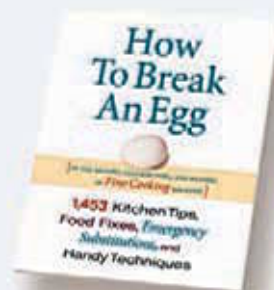
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TIP

The easy way to slice peppers

Even with a sharp knife, slick pepper skins can be difficult to slice through. Make it easier on yourself by arranging the pepper segments skin side down on the cutting board. This positions the soft, easier-to-cut flesh on top, with the tougher skin against the board, where it takes less effort to slice through with a little pressure.

—Dabney Gough



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thai-style steak with red curry sauce and spicy carrot salad

You can find Thai red curry paste in the Asian section of your supermarket, or try an Asian market, which might have more brand options. Be sure to shake the coconut milk vigorously before you open the can.

Serves 4

- 1½ lb. sirloin steak**
 - Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 Tbs. canola oil**
- 3 Tbs. fresh lime juice**
- 2 Tbs. fish sauce**
- 2 tsp. light brown sugar**
- 6 medium carrots, peeled and grated**
- ¼ cup tightly packed fresh cilantro, roughly chopped**
- 1-2 jalapeño or serrano chiles, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped**
- ¾ cup canned unsweetened coconut milk**
- 1 Tbs. Thai red curry paste**

Season the steak all over with 1½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper. Heat 1 Tbs. of the oil in a large heavy-duty skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the steak, flipping once, until well browned outside and medium rare inside, 10 to 12 minutes total.

Meanwhile, put the remaining 1 Tbs. oil, 2 Tbs. of the lime juice, 1½ Tbs. of the fish sauce, and 1 tsp. of the sugar in a large bowl and whisk to combine and dissolve the sugar. Add the carrots, cilantro, and chiles and toss well to coat.

When the steak is done, transfer to a large plate, loosely cover with foil, and keep

warm. Return the skillet to the stovetop over medium-low heat. Add ¼ cup water and bring to a boil, scraping with a wooden spoon to release any brown bits. Add the coconut milk, curry paste, and the remaining 1 Tbs. lime juice, ½ Tbs. fish sauce, and 1 tsp. sugar; cook, whisking constantly, until thickened and fragrant, 4 to 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Thinly slice the steak across the grain and transfer to plates. Spoon the sauce over the top and serve with the carrot salad on the side.

—Liz Pearson



lemony orzo with tuna and artichoke hearts

No dry vermouth or white wine on hand? Deglaze the skillet with chicken broth or water instead.

Serves 4

Kosher salt

1½ cups dried orzo (about 9 oz.)

1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

1 small yellow onion, finely chopped

Freshly ground black pepper

¼ cup dry vermouth or white wine

1 14-oz. can artichoke hearts, drained and quartered

½ cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained and thinly sliced

1 5-oz. can water-packed solid white tuna, drained

3 Tbs. crème fraîche or sour cream

3 Tbs. fresh lemon juice

3 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh basil

Bring a large pot of well-salted water to a boil. Add the orzo and cook according to package timing until al dente. Drain well.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion, ½ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. pepper and cook, stirring often, until deep golden brown, 7 to 8 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat and add the vermouth or wine. Return the skillet to the heat and stir well, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom. Add the artichoke hearts and sun-dried tomatoes and cook just until tender and heated through, 2 to 3 minutes more. Off the heat, gently stir in the tuna.

Transfer the hot orzo to a large bowl and toss with the crème fraîche and lemon juice. Add the onion-artichoke mixture, 2 Tbs. of the basil, and salt and pepper to taste. Toss gently to combine. Spoon into bowls, garnish with the remaining 1 Tbs. basil, and serve.

—Liz Pearson



quick tandoori chicken thighs

The yogurt in this spicy marinade helps tenderize the chicken and brings lots of tangy flavor to the dish.

Serves 4 to 6

1 cup plain low-fat yogurt

2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice

1 Tbs. minced fresh ginger

2 tsp. minced garlic

1 tsp. ground turmeric

½ tsp. ground coriander

½ tsp. ground cumin

½ tsp. garam masala

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

8 skin-on, bone-in chicken thighs

Vegetable oil for the grill

In a large bowl, whisk the yogurt, lemon juice, ginger, garlic, turmeric, coriander, cumin, garam masala, ½ tsp. salt, and several grinds of black pepper. Add the chicken thighs to the marinade and turn to coat them thoroughly. Cover and refrigerate while you heat the grill.

Prepare a medium gas or charcoal grill fire. If you are using a charcoal grill, spread the hot coals across two-thirds of the bottom grate and leave the remaining portion clear. If you are using gas, turn one of the burners to low to create a cooler zone. Scrub the grill grate with a wire brush and then use a paper towel to wipe it with oil.

Remove the chicken thighs from the marinade and wipe off the excess (don't worry if some remains). Put the chicken, skin side down, directly over the hot part of the grill and grill, covered, until the skin is browned, 3 to 4 minutes (don't leave the grill at this point because flare-ups may occur; if they do, move the chicken away from the flame).

Flip the chicken and grill until well browned on the second side, 3 to 4 minutes. Move the thighs to the cooler part of the grill and continue to grill, covered, until their internal temperature registers 165°F on an instant-read thermometer, 10 to 15 minutes more.

—Domenica Marchetti

falafel with tomato-cucumber salad

Falafel are usually deep-fried, but pan-searing these chickpea fritters is healthier (and not as messy). Serve them in pita bread, topped with thick yogurt or tahini sauce, if you like.

Serves 4

- 1 15-oz. can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 7 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. ground coriander
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- ½ cup plain fine dry breadcrumbs; more as needed
- 1½ cups cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1 medium pickling cucumber or ½ English cucumber, halved and sliced ¼ inch thick
- 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- 4 pitas, warmed

Heat the oven to 425°F.

In a food processor, pulse the chickpeas, 2 Tbs. of the oil, the cumin, coriander, 1 tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. black pepper into a chunky

paste. Add the onion and breadcrumbs and pulse until the mixture tightens up. You should be able to easily form it into a patty—add more breadcrumbs as needed. Gently form the chickpea mixture into twelve ½-inch-thick patties.

Heat 2 Tbs. of the oil in a 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering hot. Add 6 of the patties and cook until nicely browned, about 2 minutes. Flip and cook the other sides until browned, 1 to 2 minutes more. Transfer the patties to a baking sheet. Repeat with 2 Tbs. more oil and the remaining six patties. Bake the patties until heated through, about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, toss the tomatoes and cucum-

ber with the lemon juice, the remaining 1 Tbs. oil, and salt to taste.

Split the pitas and stuff them with the falafel and tomato-cucumber salad.

—Tony Rosenfeld

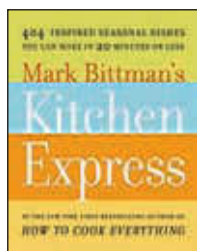


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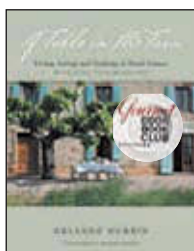
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caramelized onion cheeseburgers

Burgers just got better with the addition of tender sweet onions, melted cheese, and tangy lemon-Dijon mayonnaise.

Serves 4

- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil; more as needed**
- 1 large sweet onion, thinly sliced (about 2 cups)**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- ¼ cup mayonnaise**
- 1 Tbs. Dijon mustard**
- 1½ tsp. fresh lemon juice**
- 1 tsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary**
- 1 small clove garlic, minced**
- 1½ lb. 85%-lean ground beef**
- 4 slices Comté or Gruyère cheese**
- 4 good-quality hamburger buns or rolls, split**
- 12 fresh arugula leaves**

Prepare a medium-high gas or charcoal grill fire. Alternatively, position an oven rack 5 to 6 inches from the broiler and heat the broiler to high. Line the bottom of a broiler pan with

foil and lightly oil the perforated part of the pan.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion, ¼ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper; reduce the heat to medium low and cook, stirring occasionally, until deeply golden brown and tender, 15 to 18 minutes.

Combine the mayonnaise, Dijon, lemon juice, rosemary, and garlic in a small bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper and set aside.

In a medium bowl, gently combine the beef with ¼ tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper. Form the beef into 4 patties (3½ inches in diameter) and make a deep depression in the center of each patty so the burgers keep their shape during cooking. Lightly sprinkle the patties with ¼ tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper. Grill or broil them on the prepared pan for about 4 minutes per side for medium, or until desired doneness. Top each burger with 1 slice of the cheese and grill or broil until melted, 30 to 60 seconds.

Toast the buns on the grill or under the broiler until golden, 30 to 60 seconds. Serve the burgers on the toasted buns with the caramelized onions, mayonnaise, and arugula.

—David Bonom



Career Option



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WHERE TO BUY IT

berry syrups, page 18

Tarnow sugar bowl and creamer, \$36, williamssonoma.com, 877-812-6235. **Ball quilted-crystal Mason jelly jars**, cases of 12, \$7.99 for 4 oz. and \$9.49 for 8 oz., canningpantry.com, 800-285-9044. **Fagor America home canning kit**, \$25, fagoramerica.com. **Locking tongs**, see Shellfish, below center. **Norpro canning rack**, \$5.99, thekitchenstore.com, 800-458-2616.

corn, page 34

Stone-ground yellow cornmeal, \$3.99 for 2 lb., old-mill.com, 877-653-6455. **Dried lavender**, \$4.99 for 1 oz., Kalustyans.com, 800-352-3451.



ice pops, page 50

Direction 9-oz. double old-fashioned glass, \$8.95, crateandbarrel.com, 800-967-6696. **Small Williams martini glasses**, \$72 for a set of 4, williamssonoma.com, 877-812-6235. **Nachtman bistro Champagne flute**, \$11.50, in Williams Sonoma stores only, 877-812-6235.

From prairiemoon.biz, 866-331-0767: **Freezer pop sticks**, \$2.49 for a bag of 50. **Ice pops mold (10)**, \$19.95. **Groovy freezer pop mold**, \$11.95.

omelets, page 24

All-Clad 8-inch nonstick skillet, \$63.75, cooking.com/fc, 800-663-8810. **Oxo Good Grips to-mato sauce spatula**, \$7.99, bedbathandbeyond.com, 800-462-3966.



party in the kitchen, page 62

lichiko shochu, \$21.99 for a 750-ml bottle, mainlywines.com, 877-247-4062. **Fresh lychees**, \$26.25 for 2 lb. (when in season), melissas.com, 800-588-0151. **Colorways 4-piece medium bowl set**, in tonal black with glitter, \$29.95, www.zak.com for stores, 509-244-0555.

From crateandbarrel.com, 800-967-6696: **Ona pitcher**, large, \$26.95. **Hazel flatware**, \$29.95 for a 5-piece place setting. **Nilsson small pitcher**, \$26.95. **Nilsson dinnerware**, \$69.95 for a 5-piece place setting. **Nilsson rectangular dish**, brown, \$54.95. **Three-part square dish**, \$29.95. **Lodge cast-iron round skillet**, \$27.95. **Rings glasses**, 16 oz., \$1.50. **Rings pitcher**, \$7.95.



test kitchen, page 81

Oxo ginger peeler, \$6.95, cooking.com/fc, 800-663-8810.

beer cocktails, page 32

Crispin hard apple cider brut, \$6.99 for 4 bottles, storewineconnect.com/harbor, 952-472-0648. **Farnum Hill semi-dry cider**, farnumhillciders.com for stores. **Lindemans framboise lambic** and **Lindemans pêche**, \$9.69 each for a 25-oz. bottle, bevmo.com, 877-772-3866. **Spiegelau Tubes beer classics lager glass**, 2 for \$29.90, glassware.riedel.com, 888-474-3335.



shellfish, page 42

Fresh lobster and other shellfish, market price, brownetrading.com, 800-944-7848. **Seafood scissors**, \$9.95, williamssonoma.com, 877-812-6235. **Locking tongs**, 19½ inches long, \$17.95, cooking.com/fc, 800-663-8810.

eggplant, page 76

The Gripper cutting board, 11x14 inches, \$14.95, cooking.com/fc, 800-663-8810.

menus, page 96

Wine recommendations courtesy of Patrick Watson at Smith & Vine in Brooklyn, New York. For more great wine ideas, go to smithandvine.com, or call 718-243-2864.

feta, page 70

All-Clad stainless-steel 8-quart tall stock pot, \$295, williamssonoma.com, 877-812-6235. **Five-piece measuring cup set by All-Clad**, \$49.95, cooking.com/fc, 800-663-8810. **Twelve-cup vintage glass food storage**, \$10.99, thecontainerstore.com, 888-266-8246. **Stainless mixing bowls with pour spouts**, \$39.95 for a set of 3, crateandbarrel.com, 800-967-6696. **Maple deep wooden spoon**, 14-inch, \$6.95, crateandbarrel.com, 800-967-6696. **White ramekins by Corningware**, \$12.95 for set of 4, cooking.com/fc, 800-663-8810. **Cheesecloth**, \$3.99, bedbathandbeyond.com, 800-462-3966. **Pyrex measuring cups**, 1 cup and 1 quart, \$3.99 and \$5.99, bedbathandbeyond.com, 800-462-3966. **Henkels Pro S 10-inch chef's knife**, \$139.95, cooking.com/fc, 800-663-8810. **Epicurean Chef Series cutting board**, 27x18 inches, \$129.99, epicureancs.com, 866-678-3500. **Slotted spoon**, \$9.95, crateandbarrel.com, 800-967-6696. **Large Tovolo stainless-steel colander**, \$19.99, target.com, 800-591-3869. **Taylor instant-read 1¼-inch dial thermometer**, \$7.95, chefgadget.com.

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NUTRITION

Recipes	Calories (kcal)	Fat Cal (kcal)	Protein (g)	Carb (g)	Total Fat (g)	Sat Fat (g)	Mono Fat (g)	Poly Fat (g)	Chol (mg)	Sodium (g)	Fiber (g)
TOMATILLOS, P. 16											
Margarita-Marinated Skirt Steak with Tomatillo Salsa	380	200	33	9	22	6	12	2.5	85	290	3
BERRIES, P. 18											
Fresh Berry Syrup (per 1 Tbs.)	50	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BIG BUY: BREAD, P. 20											
Summer Berry Trifle	310	100	5	44	11	7	3	0.5	40	230	2
Chilled Tomato and Bread Soup with Garlic and Basil	210	80	5	26	9	1.5	7	1	0	600	2
PLT Salad	220	130	6	15	15	2.5	10	1.5	10	560	2
CLASSIC OMELET, P. 24											
Cheese Omelet	310	220	21	1	24	12	8	2	470	370	0
GOOD LIFE, P. 28											
Ancho-Marinated Pork and Mango Skewers	250	80	25	20	8	2	4	1.5	75	120	2
BEER COCKTAILS, P. 32											
Eve's Black Heart	180	0	1	17	0	0	0	0	0	10	0
Peach Melba Cocktail	130	0	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Michelada	110	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	1170	0
CORN, P. 34											
Risotto with Corn, Spicy Sausage, and Wilted Arugula	530	170	18	73	19	8	7	2.5	25	610	3
Sweet Corn Cake with Blueberry-Lavender Compote	320	130	4	46	15	9	4	1	85	140	2
Corn Fritters with Charred Tomato Salsa (per fritter)	70	35	2	7	4	1	1.5	1	20	120	1
Charred Tomato Salsa (per 1 Tbs.)	20	10	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	75	1
Toasted Corn, Cherry Tomato, and Edamame Salad	200	110	5	18	13	1.5	8	1.5	0	65	3
Summer Corn Soup with Crisp Prosciutto	170	60	5	24	7	4	2	0.5	20	440	3
GRILLING SHELLFISH, P. 42											
Grilled Shrimp	140	70	18	0	8	1	5	1	170	610	0
Grilled Mussels, Clams, and Oysters	100	25	14	4	2.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	35	340	0
Grilled Lobster	170	35	31	1	3.5	0.5	2	0	155	480	0
Old Bay Dipping Sauce (per 1 Tbs.)	100	100	0	0	11	7	3	0	30	120	0
Bloody Mary Cocktail Sauce (per ¼ cup)	70	0	1	16	0	0	0	0	0	680	0
Orange-Saffron Aioli (per 1 Tbs.)	130	130	0	1	15	2	9	4	15	330	0
ICE POPS, P. 50											
Lemon-Vodka Cream Pops	180	110	2	17	12	7	3.5	0	45	60	0
Bellini Pops	100	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bittersweet Chocolate-Bourbon Pops	120	50	1	19	6	2.5	0	0	0	35	1
TOMATO SAUCE, P. 54											
Fresh Tomato Sauce (per ½ cup)	70	35	2	8	4	0.5	2.5	0.5	0	150	2
Spaghetti with Summer Tomato Sauce	520	70	18	95	7	1	3.5	1.5	0	830	8
Curried Chickpea and Summer Vegetable Stew	300	110	11	40	13	4.5	4	2.5	0	520	12
Greek-Spiced Lamb Meatballs in Tomato Sauce	470	270	24	22	30	11	14	2.5	135	1040	4
Grilled Pizzas with Fresh Tomatoes and Arugula	950	450	38	90	50	19	24	4.5	95	1940	8
PARTY IN THE KITCHEN, P. 62											
Shochu Watermelon Lemonade	120	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shrimp with Spicy Mayo and Garlic Breadcrumbs	360	230	21	13	25	4	7	12	180	870	1
Tonkatsu and Mixed Herb Salad	350	130	35	20	14	4	6	2.5	130	450	2
Mixed Herb Salad with Honey-Lime Dressing	45	5	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	270	2
Sesame, Snow Pea, and Shiitake Pasta Salad	220	70	6	30	8	1	3	3.5	0	390	3
Pineapple, Strawberry, and Lychee Parfaits	160	5	2	42	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	4
FETA, P. 70											
Homemade Feta (per 1 oz.)	70	50	4	1	6	4	1.5	0	25	320	0
EGGPLANT PARMIGIANA, P. 76											
Classic Eggplant Parmigiana	580	460	13	21	52	11	33	5	25	320	9
Eggplant Parmigiana Rolls with Baby Arugula	250	170	5	16	19	3	12	2.5	55	170	3
MAKE IT TONIGHT, P. 88											
Lemony Orzo with Tuna and Artichoke Hearts	470	110	23	60	12	4	5	1.5	25	710	4
Thai-Style Steak with Red Curry Sauce and Carrot Salad	400	230	30	15	25	11	9	2.5	75	1300	3
Falafel with Tomato-Cucumber Salad	640	250	18	80	28	4	18	4.5	0	920	12
Quick Tandoori Chicken Thighs	210	120	21	1	13	3.5	5	3	80	105	0
Caramelized Onion Cheeseburgers	740	450	43	27	50	16	20	10	140	930	2

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at Nutritional Solutions in Melville, New York. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used. Optional ingre-

redients with measured amounts are included; ingredients without specific quantities are not. Analyses are per serving; when a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion

is used. When the quantities of salt and pepper aren't specified, the analysis is based on ¼ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. pepper per serving for entrées, and ½ tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper per serving for side dishes.



MENUS



the new clambake

Shellfish on the Grill
pages 44–46

Bloody Mary Cocktail Sauce
page 48

Toasted Corn, Cherry Tomato,
and Edamame Salad
page 36

Pineapple, Strawberry, and
Lychee Parfaits
page 69

*To drink: dry stout, like Guinness
Extra Stout (original)*

a summer saturday

Peach Melba Cocktail
page 33

Fresh Corn Fritters
with Charred Tomato Salsa
page 38

Ancho-Marinated Pork
and Mango Skewers
page 29

Orzo and Grilled Vegetables
with Feta, Olives, and Oregano
FineCooking.com

Summer Berry Trifle
page 21

*To drink: a delicate dry rosé, like
Commanderie de Peyrassol 2008*



brunch at home

Cheese Omelet
page 25

Mixed Fruit Salad
Buttermilk Pancakes
FineCooking.com

Berry Syrups
page 18

Bellini Pops
page 52

*To drink: a crisp sparkling wine,
like Brüder Dr. Becker
Scheurebe Sekt 2005*



friends for dinner

The Michelada
page 33

Poached Shrimp with Spicy Mayo
and Garlic Breadcrumbs
page 64

Margarita-Marinated Skirt Steak
with Grilled Tomatillo Salsa
page 16

Garlic Fries
FineCooking.com

Lemon-Vodka Cream Pops
page 53



the spice trail

Falafel with Tomato-
Cucumber Salad
page 90

Quick Tandoori
Chicken Thighs
page 89

Grilled Corn
page 39

Pistachio Peach Sundaes
with Crisp Phyllo Cups
FineCooking.com

*To drink: a pale bock, like
Smuttnose Maibock*



italian vegetarian

Chilled Fresh Tomato, Basil,
and Bread Soup
page 20

Classic Eggplant Parmigiana
page 78

Mixed Greens Salad



Strawberry-Balsamic Granita
FineCooking.com

*To drink: a dry yet fruity
effervescent red wine, like Medici
Ermete Concerto Lambrusco 2007*



RECIPE INDEX



Cover

-  Grilled Corn 39
-  Grilled Shellfish 44–46





Appetizers

-  Eggplant Parmigiana Rolls with Pine Nuts and Baby Arugula 79
-  Fresh Corn Fritters with Charred Tomato Salsa 38
- Poached Shrimp with Spicy Mayo and Garlic Breadcrumbs 64


Soup

-  Chilled Fresh Tomato, Basil, and Bread Soup 20
-  Summer Corn Soup with Crisp Prosciutto 40

Salads

-  Mixed Herb Salad with Honey-Lime Dressing 67
-  PLT Salad 21
-  Sesame, Snow Pea, and Shiitake Pasta Salad 69
-  Toasted Corn, Cherry Tomato, and Edamame Salad 36

Chicken

-  Quick Tandoori Chicken Thighs 89






Beef, Pork & Lamb

- Ancho-Marinated Pork and Mango Skewers 29
-  Caramelized Onion Cheeseburgers 91
- Greek-Spiced Lamb Meatballs in Tomato Sauce 57
- Margarita-Marinated Skirt Steak with Grilled Tomatillo Salsa 16
-  Thai-Style Steak with Red Curry Sauce and Spicy Carrot Salad 88
- Tonkatsu and Mixed Herb Salad 66





Fish & Shellfish

-  Grilled Lobster 44
-  Grilled Mussels, Clams, and Oysters 46
-  Grilled Shrimp 44
-  Lemony Orzo with Tuna and Artichoke Hearts 89
- Poached Shrimp with Spicy Mayo and Garlic Breadcrumbs 64



Pizza, Pasta & Rice

-  Lemony Orzo with Tuna and Artichoke Hearts 89
-  Grilled Mushroom, Onion, and Fontina Pizzas with Fresh Tomatoes and Arugula 61
-  Pizza Dough 61
- Risotto with Corn, Spicy Sausage, and Wilted Arugula 37
-  Sesame, Snow Pea, and Shiitake Pasta Salad 69
-  Spaghetti with Summer Tomato Sauce 56





Meatless Mains

-  Classic Eggplant Parmigiana 78
-  Curried Chickpea and Summer Vegetable Stew 58
-  Falafel with Tomato-Cucumber Salad 90
-  Grilled Mushroom, Onion, and Fontina Pizzas with Fresh Tomatoes and Arugula 61







Eggs & Cheese

-  Cheese Omelet 25
-  Homemade Feta 72





Side Dishes

-  Fresh Corn Fritters with Charred Tomato Salsa 38
-  Grilled Corn 39
-  Sesame, Snow Pea, and Shiitake Pasta Salad 69
-  Toasted Corn, Cherry Tomato, and Edamame Salad 36




Sauces & Condiments

-  Fresh Berry Syrup 18
-  Bloody Mary Cocktail Sauce ... 48
-  Charred Tomato Salsa 39
-  Fresh Tomato Sauce 56
-  Old Bay Dipping Sauce 48
-  Orange-Saffron Aioli 49


Beverages


-  Eve's Black Heart 32
-  Peach Melba Cocktail 33
-  Shochu Watermelon Lemonade 64
-  The Michelada 33

Desserts

-  Bellini Pops 52
-  Bittersweet Chocolate-Bourbon Pops 53
-  Lemon-Vodka Cream Pops 53
-  Pineapple, Strawberry, and Lychee Parfaits 69
-  Summer Berry Trifle 21
-  Sweet Corn Cake with Blueberry-Lavender Compote 40

 **VEGETARIAN:** May contain eggs and dairy ingredients

 **MAKE AHEAD:** Can be completely prepared ahead (may need reheating and a garnish to serve)

 **QUICK:** 30 minutes and under



the dish

Name: Diane Hatz

Age: 47

Job: Founder and creative marketing director at Sustainable Table, a nonprofit educational group that advocates sustainable eating

Started: 2003

Where: New York City

Known for: Producing animated spoofs of the movie *The Matrix*, to promote independent family farms

Find out more: sustainabletable.org

Diane Hatz

Changing the way people eat, with help from some barnyard friends. **BY LISA WADDLE**

Fine Cooking: Everyone wants to eat better—what prompted you to make it your life's work?

Hatz: A mango. I live in New York's East Village, and one day I got up the nerve to go into a vegetarian health food store a few doors down from my apartment. I bought an organic mango, and it changed my life.

FC: How so?

Hatz: It was the sweetest, tastiest piece of fruit I'd ever eaten. I realized, "This is better for me, it's better for the environment, and it just tastes good." I wanted to share that.

FC: So how did you get from that mango to where you are now, running a nonprofit and making educational cartoons that reveal the darker side of corporate farming?

Hatz: I was describing how we all think our bacon and milk come from these sunny family farms, when in reality, the animals are in densely packed, unsanitary conditions. There's a huge disconnect between the fantasy we want to believe is true versus what's really going on. Someone said, "That sounds like the movie *The Matrix*." With that, our movie wrote itself.

FC: Was the world ready for your message?

Hatz: *The Matrix* launched in November 2003, right when the third *Matrix* film came out. We had 10,000 people watch our video in the first three days. Now it's in some 30 languages, including Tibetan and Swahili, and has been seen by more than 15 million people.

FC: Talk about viral videos! How else have you spread the word about the issues surrounding how food is raised or grown?

Hatz: We showed *The Meatrix* at Bonnaroo, the Woodstock-like annual music festival in Tennessee. I brought a 6-foot-tall cardboard cutout of Moopheaus, the cow in the video that's based on the Laurence Fishburne character in *The Matrix*. I also rode a bio-fueled bus cross-country for a Pie Across America Tour.

FC: Why pie?

Hatz: To me, pies are a metaphor for something bigger. They represent a connection to local food, and they're meant for sharing.

FC: You've gone from fruit to film to pie—what's next?

Hatz: We're in the process of launching a How to Host a Sustainable Dinner Party kit that people can download from our Web site. It's based on the idea that by having people over and serving sustainable food—and we'll help you find out where to buy it—you can start a conversation about what it means and how to do it. Start with two people, and they tell six people, and so on.

FC: Is "sustainable" just the latest food buzzword?

Hatz: Sustainability is a way of life.

FC: So, where do you buy your meat?

Hatz: I've been a vegetarian for 21 years. It's a personal choice, not something I think everyone should do. The whole point of *The Meatrix* was to get people to buy sustainable meat.



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